# MEMBERSHIP MANUAL

OF THE

METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH

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# MEMBERSHIP MANUAL

OF THE

# METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH

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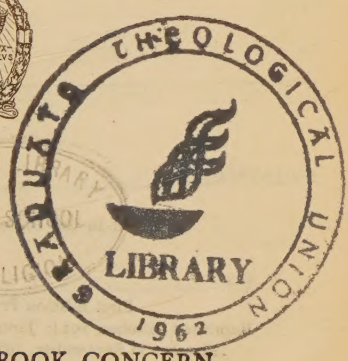


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THE PROBATIONER'S MANUAL
OF THE
METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH

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THE MEMBERSHIP MANUAL
OF THE
METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH

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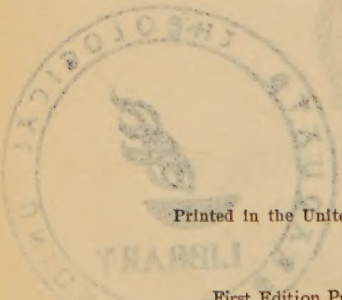

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# This Certifies

THAT

_____

WAS ENROLLED IN THE

## Preparatory Membership Class

OF THE

_____

## Methodist Episcopal Church

At_____

In the_____Conference

_____19

_____

Pastor in Charge.

# Certificate of Baptism

# This Certifies That

_____

_____of

_____

and

_____

Born_____

Was baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit at

_____

On the_____day of

_____in the Year of Our Lord, 19____.

_____

# Certificate of Membership

## This Certifies That

_____

Having been baptized and duly recommended by the _____

And having finished a careful course of study and training prescribed for

### Preparatory Members of the Methodist Episcopal Church

After giving satisfactory answers to the required questions, was received into Full Membership in the _____ Methodist Episcopal Church at

_____

In the _____ Conference.

_____, 19 .

_____

Pastor in Charge.

## FOREWORD

THE Manual here presented has been prepared in pursuance of the action of the General Conference of 1912, and revised in harmony with the legislation of 1924. For the most part it is the work of the Rev. Louis F. W. Lesemann, D.D., District Superintendent of the Chicago Northern District, Rock River Conference, and is the outgrowth of his pastoral experience in preparatory membership training. The entire work has been carefully revised by Bishops McDowell, Wilson, and Anderson, representing the Board of Bishops.

The Manual makes free use of our Junior Catechism. It also embodies a number of suggestions derived from various other sources. Some readers will recognize parts of Dr. Terry's "The Lord's Creed" in the "Convert's Covenant," and will notice that two or three questions and answers are taken from other manuals. Bishop Vincent's "Ten Doctrines of Grace" are printed in full. All Scripture quotations follow the American Standard Edition of the Revised English Bible.

It is confidently believed that the use of the Manual will establish our young people in the essential truths of Christianity and of Methodism.

The wise leader of the preparatory membership class will, of course, supplement the Manual with his own suggestions and explanations. He will also suggest books for further study and reading. We especially desire that our older probationers should carefully read and study the Methodist Discipline, The Methodists, by Professor J. A. Faulkner and When We Join the Church, by A. L. Ryan.

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## AT THE DOOR OF THE CHURCH

(Preliminary Lesson)

**I. What does it mean to be a Christian?**

To be a Christian means to love and to trust, to obey and to follow the Lord Jesus Christ.

**II. Can a child be a Christian?**

Yes; any child that loves and obeys his parents can also love and obey Jesus Christ our Saviour.

**III. What does it mean to be converted?**

To be converted means to turn away from a careless, sinful, selfish life to a life of Christian love, obedience, and prayer. This can be done only by the forgiveness and help of the Lord Jesus Christ.

**IV. Must children be converted before they can become Christians?**

Children need to be converted if they have turned away from the love of God and have a sinful, willful, disobedient heart.

**V. What is a "preparatory member" in the Church?**

A preparatory member is a member under instruction in the teachings, the spirit, and the works of Jesus Christ, preparing himself for full membership in our Church.

**VI. Can children be preparatory members?**

Certainly. Every child baptized by a Methodist minister is a member under instruction (preparatory member) of our Church.

**VII. What should a Christian child do as soon as he is able to learn and understand?**

Join the Preparatory Members' Class and decide to confess Christ publicly by becoming a full member of the Church.

**VIII. When does the children's term of instruction end?**

After a careful training the pastor receives them, with the approval of their parents, into the full membership of the Church.

**IX Is the Membership Manual to be studied only by young people and children?**

No; everyone joining our Church should master the truths and facts contained in this Manual.

## WELCOME

Jesus Christ is **the Saviour of the world.** He came to save the young and the old, the rich and the poor, the good and the evil. The Church of Christ, therefore, gladly welcomes in his name *everyone* that desires to become a Christian.

A Christian **believes** what Jesus taught, **loves** what Jesus loves, and **tries to do** what Jesus would have him do.

**Jesus claims the children.** He said that they belong to his kingdom (Mark 10. 14). Just as the children have a place in the home and are loved by their parents before they know enough to love in return, so Christ gives the children a place in his Church and kingdom long before they understand what it means to be a Christian. But all children brought up in a Christian home should soon learn to know Jesus and should open their hearts to him as naturally and gladly as flowers open to the sunlight.

Many people, like Joseph, Samuel, Daniel, and Timothy, have **loved and served God from childhood.** The Saviour and his Church do not want any child ever to forsake him. But, alas! most of us drift into sin, and, like the prodigal son, must return to our Father's house before we can be true Christians. **All selfish, sinful, disobedient hearts,** whether young or old, **are unfit** for Christ's kingdom until they earnestly seek his forgiveness and friendship.

**All Christians should belong to the Church.** By uniting with the Church we enlist in Christ's great army, we strengthen and seal our purpose to serve him, we confess our faith before the world, and we become fellow workers with those who love our Lord. You have taken a step in the right direction by joining a Preparatory Membership Class. Do your best to prepare yourself for full membership. The pastor and the Church will gladly help you. You are **welcome in Christ's Church.**

**"Come thou with us, and we will do thee good."—Num. 10. 29.**

# PART FIRST—CHRISTIAN TRUTH

## a. GREAT TRUTHS OF THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION

### Christian Faith and Truth

The Christian Teaching Concerning
God, Man, Sin, The Gospel, Jesus, The Holy Spirit,
The Kingdom of God, Things to Come

## CHRISTIAN FAITH AND TRUTH

You are now preparing yourself for full membership in the Church. When you are received you will be asked publicly, "Have you saving faith in the Lord Jesus Christ?"

It is proper, therefore, that you should learn **the meaning** of this question by mastering the **great, main truths** about God, man, sin, the gospel, Jesus our Saviour, the Holy Spirit, the kingdom of God, and the things to come.

But it is not enough for you simply to learn about these great truths. **You must also receive them into your heart.** Your answer to this vital question depends almost entirely upon your personal love, faith, and loyalty to Jesus Christ.

Bird study helps us to love birds; the right kind of study of our country makes us patriotic; and the study of truth makes us truth-lovers. Young Saul of Tarsus became zealous for the Jewish law while he studied at the feet of Gamaliel (Acts *22.* 3).

The early Church carefully trained the children and all those who wished to confess Christ. As "catechumens," or preparatory members, they usually made their public confession and were received into the Church about Easter time. This training and confession of faith greatly helped them to be faithful even unto death. Nothing will mean more to us than the great **Christian truths.** Let us so study them that when we shall have finished our training we may have a great **saving faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.**

Learn the answers to all the questions, carefully read the explanations, and carry out all the exercises.

## LESSON I

### GOD

1. **Who is God?**

God is our Father in heaven, the Creator of all things, and the Giver of every good gift.

"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" (Gen. 1. 1).

2. **Where is God?**

God is everywhere (Eph. 4. 6; Acts 17. 28).

3. **What does God know?**

God knows all things, even the thoughts of our hearts (Psa. 139. 1-4).

4. **What can God do?**

God can do whatever in his goodness he wills to do.

5. **How long has God lived?**

God has lived always, and will live forever (Psa. 90. 1, 2).

6. **Is there but one God?**

There is but one—the living and true God.

7. **Is God good?**

God is holy, just, and good.

8. **Does God love us?**

Yes, God loves us; for "God is Love" (1 John 4. 16).

"We love, because he first loved us" (1 John 4. 19).

9. **Does God watch over us and care for us?**

God ever watches over us, like a mother over her children, and he supplies all our needs.

EXERCISE: Repeat the 23d Psalm; also read the 121st Psalm and Matt. 6. 25-34.

10. **How has God made himself known to us?**

God has made himself known to us in nature, in the Bible, and in our hearts and has manifested himself as the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

## OUR HEAVENLY FATHER

You doubtless have seen pictures of heathen gods. But have you ever seen a picture of **our God?** Few painters have ever tried to paint, or draw him; for God is a **spirit without a body** (John 4. 24).

If some clear night you should watch the heavens, you might discover a beautiful little cluster of small stars in the shape of a "Y," called the Pleiades. It looks so small that you might think that it could be covered with a coin. You can see only about seven stars, but a big telescope shows over three thousand stars in the cluster, each of which is a sun, like our own sun, which lights a whole system of planets. There are millions of these star-suns. What a great universe this is! Yet God is its Maker and provides for every creature in it. He is everywhere present and at work in all these worlds, as your soul is present and active in your small body. God knows all things. He has always been and will live forever. **What is man in comparison with God?** Let us reverence him!

God is too great for us to understand, but we know his heart and his character. He is holy, kind, and good. God is **our heavenly Father** and loves us.

The simplest and best way to think of God is to remember that he is **revealed in Jesus** Christ, his Son. "Before Christ men had heard of God; in Christ they have seen him." God thinks, acts, and loves like Jesus. If we love and obey him, we may without fear say, with Jesus, "Abba, Father," which means, "My dear Father!" (John 14. 6-11.)

**"Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart**
**Be acceptable in thy sight,**
**O Jehovah, my rock, and my redeemer."**

—Psa. 19. 14.

## LESSON II

### MAN

**11. In what respects is man like the lower animals?**

Man has a body which lives, grows, and dies, like that of other animals.

**12. In what does man differ from the lower animals?**

Man can think and know, speak and plan, choose and love, as does no other animal. He also has a conscience and a desire for God and the good.

EXERCISE: Repeat or read the 8th Psalm.

**13. What makes this difference between man and the lower animals?**

Man is an unseen soul, or spirit, living while on earth in an animal body.

**14. What does the Bible tell us about man?**

The Bible tells us that God created man in his own image.

"God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him" (Gen. 1. 27).

**15. Does the soul die with the body?**

No; the soul will live forever (Matt. 10. 28; John 14. 19; 11. 25, 26).

**16. What is conscience?**

Conscience is the voice within us, which urges us to do right and reproves us for doing wrong.

**17. Whence came our conscience?**

Conscience is from God. To disobey conscience is to disobey God.

**18. Are all human beings related to one another?**

Yes; all human beings are related; for all have the same heavenly Father, and belong to one great family (Acts 17. 26-28).

EXERCISE: Tell the parable of the good Samaritan (Luke 10. 30-37).

## OUR HUMAN FAMILY

**Man is the highest being on earth.** In some museums the skeleton of a monkey is placed beside that of a man. The two skeletons look much alike, but there is a world of difference between living men and monkeys or any other animals. Man wears clothes, uses tools, reasons, makes discoveries and inventions, and controls both animals and nature. The other animals have remained the same, while man is ever making progress. This difference is due to the human soul, our unseen self, which, like God, is to live forever.

Man has a conscience and follows ideals; he prays, worships, and seeks God. As the little needle of the compass, because it is magnetic, always tends to point toward the great magnetic pole in the frozen north, so the human soul turns toward God for happiness and peace, because it **comes from him.**

God has given us our conscience. It is a voice within us saying: "You have a great Master; obey him; do right. Beware lest you do wrong!" **Always obey your conscience;** for to disobey your conscience is wrong. Conscience, however, is influenced by our knowledge and character, and must be educated in order to be perfectly reliable. The Holy Spirit, the Bible, prayer, and noble examples are its best teachers.

God wants **all men to be brothers** and to form one great family. As a mother is grieved when her children wrong and hate each other, so God is grieved by every unbrotherly act or thought. **Whatever we do to any human being, we do to our heavenly Father.**

**"There can be neither Jew nor Greek, there can be neither bond nor free, there can be no male and female; for ye all are one man in Christ Jesus."**—Gal. 3. 28.

## LESSON III

### SIN

**19. Has man always obeyed his conscience and the commandments of God?**

No; man has sinned from the beginning.

**20. What is sin?**

Sin is any act, word, or purpose in which we knowingly disobey God and conscience, and any wilful failure to keep his law of love.

"Sin is lawlessness" (1 John 3. 4).

"To him that knoweth to do good and doeth it not, to him it is sin" (James 4. 17).

**21. What Bible story gives us a vivid picture of the beginning of sin?**

The story of Adam and Eve, who were tempted to disobey God and were driven from the garden of Eden.

EXERCISE: Tell the story of the first sin (Gen., Chapter 3).

**22. What are the results of sin?**

Sin brings sorrow, pain, and death in this life, and also in the world to come.

"The wages of sin is death" (Rom. 6. 23).

"He that doeth wrong shall receive again for the wrong that he hath done" (Col. 3. 25).

EXERCISE: Repeat the 1st Psalm.

**23. Has our sin any effect on others?**

Sin hurts and harms others oftentimes as much as ourselves.

**24. What is the worst result of sin?**

Sin makes us guilty and evil, and separates us from our heavenly Father.

**25. What is the cause of nearly all human misery?**

Sin is the cause of nearly all human misery. It has marred and injured our whole race.

**26. Are all men sinners?**

Yes; even the best men and women confess themselves to be sinners.

"All have sinned, and fall short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3. 23).

EXERCISE: Repeat or read the 51st Psalm.

## OUR ENEMY

Your conscience awoke so early in your life that you do not remember when first you knew right from wrong. But you probably also fail to remember your first disobedience, your first sin.

**Sin is disobedience, selfishness, badness.** It is in the heart and depends upon our intentions. A man might kill a hundred people by accident and be innocent, but if he purposes to kill one person, he is a murderer. Sin consists in wilfully doing what is wrong, or in knowingly neglecting what is good. To neglect a helpless baby would be just as truly a sin as if you punish it in anger.

**Selfishness is the real cause of all sin,** though ignorance, thoughtlessness, and evil example are often much to blame. If people saw all the consequences beforehand, many sins would be avoided, but not all; for sin is contagious and dangerously attractive. It is a poison which has infected the whole human race.

Sin always brings **guilt and punishment** upon the sinner and also untold **evil and harm upon others.** A drunkard ruins his own life, wastes his money, disgraces and often abuses his wife and children. His sons usually inherit a terrible appetite for drink and become worse slaves of it than their father. It is the same with other forms of sin. They result in measureless woe both here and hereafter.

**Sin separates us from God.** When Adam and Eve sinned they became afraid of God and tried to hide from him. A disobedient boy shuns his father; even so sin estranges us from God. Let us hate sin! It is our worst enemy.

**"Search me, O God, and know my heart:**
**Try me, and know my thoughts;**
**And see if there be any wicked way in me,**
**And lead me in the way everlasting."**

—Psa. 139. 23, 24.

## LESSON IV

## THE GOSPEL

**27. What does the word "gospel" mean?**

The word "gospel" means "good news."

**28. What is the best news ever told?**

"God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life" (John 3. 16).

**29. For what purpose did Jesus say he came into the world?**

Jesus said, "I came that they may have life, and may have it abundantly" (John 10. 10); also, "The Son of man came to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19. 10).

**30. What was one of the greatest joys of the Saviour?**

The joy of finding the lost.

EXERCISE: Repeat the parables of the lost sheep, the lost coin, and the lost son (Luke, Chapter 15).

**31. What did it cost Jesus Christ to save us?**

He not only became poor, that we through him might become rich, but on the cross he gave his life a sacrifice for us.

"The Son of man also came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many" (Mark 10. 45).

**32. How does the Lord Jesus Christ save us?**

By revealing our heavenly Father, by reconciling us to him in the forgiveness of our sins, and by giving us the joy and the power of a life of service.

**33. What must we do to be saved?**

Repent of our sins, believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make him our constant Friend and Master.

EXERCISE: Tell the story of Lydia, and also that of the Philippian jailer (Acts 16. 13-15; 19-34).

**34. Are there any whom Christ is unable or unwilling to save?**

No; "He is able to save to the uttermost them that draw near unto God through him" (Heb. 7. 25); and he said, "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out" (John 6. 37).

## GOD'S GOOD NEWS

The angel said to the shepherds, "Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all the people: for there is born to you this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord." **This was God's good news.**

**In Jesus God came into human life** to save his sinful world. Men felt that they were far from God, but now in Jesus **God became one of us.** Men feared God, but Jesus taught us to love him. Jesus hates sin as God hates it, but to forgive sins and save even the most guilty was one of his greatest joys, and he assured us that it was also **a joy to his Father.**

Once a minister's son played truant from school for two days. His father was greatly grieved and said to the guilty lad, "My boy, for two days you have lived a lie in our home, so the next two days you must spend in the garret." The boy went to the garret. The table was set for supper, but the father could not eat. Night came and the family retired, but the father could not sleep. He was thinking about his boy. Finally, about midnight, he slipped quietly up the garret stair and found the lad still wide awake. The father threw his arms about his son's neck and stayed with him in the garret all that night and the next, in love sharing the lad's punishment. That changed the boy; he was never truant again, and he became one of the noblest of men. Even so, in the life, the suffering, and the death of Jesus Christ, **God shared the bitter results of sin** with us and **reconciled us to himself.**

**"Come now, and let us reason together, saith Jehovah: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow."**—Isa. 1. 18.

## LESSON V

## JESUS: HIS CHILDHOOD AND YOUTH

**35. Who was Jesus?**

Jesus was the Christ, the promised Saviour of the world.

**36. What does the name "Jesus" mean?**

The name "Jesus" means "Saviour."

"Thou shalt call his name JESUS; for it is he that shall save his people from their sins" (Matt. 1. 21).

**37. Where was Jesus born?**

Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judæa.

EXERCISE: Tell the beautiful stories of the birth and the boyhood of Jesus found in the second chapter of Matthew and in the second chapter of Luke.

**38. What do the Gospels tell us of the character of the boy Jesus?**

Jesus was obedient unto his parents and grew in wisdom and in favor with God and men (Luke 2. 40).

**39. When did Jesus begin his public ministry?**

Jesus began his public ministry when he was about thirty years of age, after he had been baptized by John the Baptist.

**40. What happened at this baptism?**

Like a dove the Holy Spirit came upon Jesus and a voice from heaven said, "This is my beloved Son" (Matt. 3. 17).

**41. Was Jesus ever tempted?**

Jesus was tempted many times, but he never sinned.

He "hath been in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin" (Heb. 4. 15).

EXERCISE: Tell the story of the temptation of Jesus in the wilderness (Matt. 4. 1-11).

**42. Is it possible for us also to overcome our temptations as Jesus did his?**

Certainly, but only by the help of the Holy Spirit.

"Ye therefore shall be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect" (Matt. 5. 48).

## THE HUMAN JESUS

Jesus spent his boyhood in the village of Nazareth in Galilee. There among the hills he grew and learned and worked, and he doubtless laughed and played just **like any other genuine boy.**

He attended the synagogue every Sabbath. When he was twelve years old he went with his parents to the passover feast at Jerusalem. The wonderful temple and its services stirred his heart, and he was so eager to learn from the great teachers of the law that he forgot all about the time to return home. His parents missed him and searched for him until they finally found him in the temple. When his mother reproached him he said: "How is it that ye sought me? Knew ye not that I must be in my Father's house?" Then follow eighteen years of silence and obedience during which he grew in wisdom and in favor with God and man. He learned the carpenter trade and people called him, **"the carpenter"** (Mark 6. 3).

At the age of thirty Jesus came to John the Baptist at the Jordan to be baptized of him. John was a great prophet and baptized everyone else without hesitation. But he said to Jesus, "I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?" This shows what John thought of the carpenter, Jesus. After the baptism John told the people that Jesus was the Messiah; for he saw the Holy Spirit come upon Jesus and heard a voice from heaven saying, **"This is my beloved Son,** in whom I am well pleased" (Matt. 3. 17).

How could the Father be otherwise than pleased with Jesus? For though he was tempted just as we are, yet he never yielded to temptation. **He was without sin—the humble, obedient, loving** Son of God.

**"And Jesus advanced in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men."**—Luke 2. 52.

## LESSON VI

## JESUS: HIS MINISTRY

**43. How did Jesus begin his ministry?**

By calling Peter and Andrew, James and John, and a few others to become his disciples, and teaching the people, saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of God is at hand."

EXERCISE: Learn the names of the twelve apostles (Matt. 10. 2-4).

**44. What attracted the multitude to Jesus?**

His message about the long-expected kingdom. Also his noble presence, his gracious spirit, his wonderful teachings, and his mighty works.

**45. Where did Jesus teach?**

Everywhere—in the synagogues, on the streets, by the seaside, and in the desert places.

**46. How did Jesus teach?**

Jesus taught the people through personal conversation, through parables, through sermons, and through his miracles.

EXERCISE: Repeat Jesus's conversation with the rich young ruler, and his words to the disciples immediately afterwards (Mark 10. 17-31).

EXERCISE: Make a list of the parables in the thirteenth chapter of Matthew.

EXERCISE: Read the first sermon of Jesus in the synagogue of Nazareth (Luke 4. 16-30); and also the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew, Chapters 5 to 7).

**47. How did Jesus teach his followers to love children?**

By taking the little children into his arms, blessing them, and saying, "Suffer the little children to come unto me; forbid them not: for to such belongeth the kingdom of God" (Mark 10. 14).

**48. What mighty works did Jesus do?**

Jesus healed the sick and the lame, cleansed the lepers, made the blind to see, the dumb to speak, and even raised the dead (Matt. 11. 2-5).

EXERCISE: Mention ten of the miracles of Jesus.

**49. Did Jesus fail to help anyone who came to him for aid?**

Jesus helped everyone who came to him in sickness, sorrow, or distress (Matt. 11. 28-30).

## THE TEACHER

Jesus began his ministry with a few disciples of John the Baptist. With them he went from village to village teaching and healing the people. How he surprised and stirred men! They hardly knew what to think of him, but soon everybody called him "Teacher."

Jesus was the Great Teacher. In his simple, matchless way he made a small mustard seed, a patched coat, or a bit of yeast illustrate the greatest truths of God. He taught one or a thousand with equal earnestness and joy. One noonday, tired and thirsty, Jesus started a conversation with a lone Samaritan woman at a well by asking her for a drink of water. Finally he told her that he was the Christ, and the woman went and brought the whole city out to see and hear him.

Jesus **taught** not only in words, but **by his whole life.** Words could not tell the heart of God; only a living, loving Saviour could do that. He said, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest"; but he also healed the sick, cleansed the lepers, and gave sight to the blind. "He went about doing good"—**the helpful, unselfish, kind Brother of all.**

His joyous goodness **kindled new hopes and the desire** for a better life in the hearts of men. A rich young ruler fell at his feet, saying, "Good Teacher, what must I do to have eternal life?" Zacchæus, the publican, gave half of his goods to the poor when Jesus came to him. The companionship of Jesus made great apostles out of lowly fishermen. *Jesus lived what he taught,* and became "the Way, the Truth, and the Life" for all mankind.

**"Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life. And we have believed and know that thou art the Holy One of God."**—John 6. 68, 69.

## LESSON VII

## JESUS: HIS DEATH AND TRIUMPH

**50. Did the people love Jesus?**

Many loved Jesus, but others hated him.

**51. Why did his enemies, especially the scribes and the Pharisees, hate Jesus?**

They hated Jesus because he reproved their wickedness; they were also jealous of him and disliked his teachings (Matthew, Chapter 23).

**52. How did Jesus come to his death?**

Jesus was betrayed by Judas, falsely accused before the high priest; "He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried."

EXERCISE: Tell the story of the last night and of the death of Jesus (Mark, Chapters 14, 15).

**53. How did Jesus die?**

Jesus died praying for his enemies, saying, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do" (Luke 23. 34).

EXERCISE: Find and write out the Seven Words of Jesus on the cross.

**54. Could Jesus have escaped the cruel death of the cross?**

Yes; but in obedience to his heavenly Father he willingly gave his life for the sins of the world (John 10. 17, 18; Matt. 26. 53, 54).

EXERCISE: Read Isaiah, Chapter 53.

**55. When did Jesus rise from the dead?**

On Sunday, the third day after his crucifixion, Jesus rose from the dead. For this reason Sunday is called "the Lord's Day," and is kept sacred by us, instead of the Jewish Sabbath.

**56. Was Jesus seen on earth after his resurrection?**

Jesus was seen repeatedly by his disciples during forty days after his resurrection.

"Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen" (Luke 24. 5, 6).

EXERCISE: Tell the resurrection stories written in Matthew, Chapter 28, and in John, Chapter 20; also read 1 Cor. 15. 1-20.

EXERCISE: Tell the story of the ascension (Acts 1. 6-11).

## THE SUFFERING SAVIOUR

It seems **strange that anyone could hate Jesus.** But because the people flocked to Jesus their leaders became jealous of him. Because he exposed their sham piety and rebuked their oppression of the poor, the scribes and the Pharisees hated and opposed him. Finally the leaders at Jerusalem determined to kill him, but they feared to touch him in public because of the people.

At last Judas, one of the disciples, agreed for money to betray Jesus, when alone, into the hands of his enemies. Jesus knew the plot, yet **he would not flee,** but went on with his work without flinching.

The traitor, with a company of soldiers, found Jesus in a garden at night. The Saviour did not resist them. They bound him and led him before the high priest, who, upon false testimony, pronounced him worthy of death. Early the next morning they brought him before Pilate, the Roman governor, to be condemned and crucified. Pilate knew that Jesus was innocent, but the leaders threatened and clamored until he yielded. Even the people cried, "Crucify him!" Thus, forsaken and rejected, Jesus bore his cross until he sank under its weight, and on Calvary was crucified between two thieves.

Jesus died praying for his enemies, and was buried by a few sorrowing friends. But on the third morning all was changed; for **Jesus arose from the dead,** the conqueror of sin and death! He appeared repeatedly during the next forty days to his astonished, joyous disciples, and prepared them for carrying on his great work in the world.

**"He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.**—Isa. 53. 5.

## LESSON VIII

## JESUS: THE DIVINE CHRIST

**57. What great truth was deeply impressed upon the disciples by the resurrection of Jesus?**

That Jesus was the divine Christ, the Son of God. "Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God" (John 20. 28).

**58. What does the name "Christ" mean?**

The name "Christ" means "the Anointed One," the long-expected Messiah or Saviour (Luke 4. 18; Acts 10. 38).

**59. Could a Christ who was only human have saved the world?**

No; we need a Teacher, Saviour, and Friend, who is both human and divine (Acts 4. 12).

**60. How do we know that Jesus is divine?**

We know Jesus is divine, because of his sinless life, his mighty works, his own words, his resurrection, and his endless power to save and uplift mankind (Mark 8. 27-29; John 10. 37, 38).

**61. What were some of the divine acts of Jesus?**

He forgave sins, delivered men from the power of evil, and made them true children of God.

EXERCISE: Give the story of Jesus forgiving the sins of a palsied man (Mark 2. 1-12).

**62. What did Jesus say about his relation to God?**

"He that hath seen me hath seen the Father; . . . I am in the Father, and the Father in me." "I and the Father are one" (John 14. 9, 10; 10. 30).

EXERCISE: Find ten sayings of Jesus in the Gospels which show that he is the Son of God.

**63. What was the last command that Jesus gave his disciples when he departed from them?**

"All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth. Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations" (Matt. 28. 18, 19).

**64. What was the last promise of Jesus?**

"Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world" (Matt. 28. 20)

## THE LORD OF LORDS

Every human life is a mystery, but Jesus was the greatest of all mysteries. He was a constant marvel even to his mother and to those that knew him best; for **he was more than a man.**

During a terrible famine Benjamin and his brothers came to Egypt for bread. They were taken to the palace of the lord of all Egypt and given a banquet. The next day this great man told the startled brothers that he was their brother Joseph. Benjamin was glad to find his brother, but doubly glad that this loving brother was the rich and mighty lord of all Egypt, who was abundantly able to provide for his family and for thousands of others. (Genesis, chapters 43 to 45.)

Even so we rejoice in the wonderful life and spirit of Jesus, our great Brother, but we glory much more in the fact that he is not only the greatest and best Man that ever lived, but also our divine Lord, the **God-man. He is as divine as he is human.** Back of his words, back of his purposes, back of his friendship and love, is all the life and power of God. This is the kind of a Saviour the world needs.

Remember, however, that he is *our Lord and Master.* He said, "Ye are my friends, if ye do the things which I command you." And also "Ye call me, Teacher, and, Lord: and ye say well; for so I am." Parents, teachers, and rulers must be obeyed. Jesus, who gave his life for us, is Lord of lords and King of kings. Let us trust and obey him forever.

**"Wherefore also God highly exalted him, and gave unto him the name which is above every name; that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, . . . and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord."**—Phil. 2. 9-11.

## LESSON IX

## THE HOLY SPIRIT

**65. Who is the Holy Spirit?**

The Holy Spirit is our unseen divine Helper (John 14. 16).

**66. What does the Holy Spirit do for all men?**

He awakens their conscience and gives them a desire for what is good.

**67. When did the Holy Spirit come in a special manner?**

On the day of Pentecost.

EXERCISE: Tell the story of Pentecost (Acts, Chapter 2).

**68. What does the Holy Spirit do wherever the gospel is faithfully proclaimed?**

He shows men their sins and urges them to repent and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ (John 16. 7-11).

**69. What does it mean "to repent"?**

With true sorrow to see and to forsake our sins, and also to turn to God and a better life (Acts 2. 37-39).

**70. What is meant by faith, or "believing in the Lord Jesus Christ"?**

To believe in the Lord Jesus Christ is to trust him with our whole heart as our personal Saviour, and to accept him as our Lord and Master (Acts 16. 30-31).

**71. If we repent and believe, what will follow?**

God will forgive our sins, cleanse our hearts from evil and give us the Holy Spirit (1 John 1. 7-9).

EXERCISE: Tell the story of Paul's repentance and faith (Acts, Chapter 9).

**72. What will the Holy Spirit do for us if we love and obey the Saviour?**

The Holy Spirit will become our unseen Companion, make us sure that we are true children of God, warn us in temptation, help us to lead a holy life, and comfort us in sorrow and in death.

**73. What does the Holy Spirit prompt Christians especially to do?**

He prompts true Christians to live a life of service, to witness for Christ, and to extend his kingdom (Acts 1. 8; Luke 9. 26).

**74. Which is the most deadly sin?**

Knowingly to resist and disobey the Holy Spirit (Mark 3. 28, 29).

## OUR UNSEEN COMPANION

As a child needs a mother, so the human spirit needs the Spirit of God. Though not always recognized, **the Holy Spirit has ever been at work among mankind.** Socrates, a great Greek philosopher, said he had an unseen "good angel" who sometimes warned him or told him what not to do. We all have this good angel; for the Holy Spirit seeks to lead all men to God and to goodness. He is the true light "which lighteth every man coming into the world."

It was on the day of Pentecost, fifty days after the resurrection of Jesus, that the Holy Spirit came mightily upon the disciples. From that time on he was their **unseen Companion,** as Jesus had been their *seen Companion.* Through him they received power to live a new life and to win men for Jesus. They felt the love, the courage, and the purpose of Jesus in their hearts.

The Holy Spirit will likewise be our **constant Friend and Companion,** if we obey him. He urges us to forsake our sins and to ask God's forgiveness. He gives us peace and joy, and makes us feel that God loves us and hears our prayer. He alarms our conscience when we are about to do wrong, and prompts and helps us to good thoughts and deeds. He is our "Comforter" in trouble. Just as Faithful in *Pilgrim's Progress* was the visible helping and guiding companion of Christian, even so the good Spirit of God is our unseen Guide and Companion. **Never disregard** the voice of **the Holy Spirit.**

**"For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God."**—Rom. 8. 14.

## LESSON X

## THE KINGDOM OF GOD

75. **What was one of the favorite expressions of Jesus?**

Jesus loved to speak of the "kingdom of God," or the "kingdom of heaven."

76. **Where is the kingdom of God?**

The kingdom of God is in the hearts of those who love God and their fellow men.

"The kingdom of God is within you" (Luke 17. 21).

77. **What is the kingdom of God?**

It is a kingdom of goodness, unselfishness, love, and service, through which Jesus is transforming the whole world.

78. **Where does Jesus describe the citizens of the kingdom of God?**

In the Beatitudes.

EXERCISE: Repeat the Beatitudes (Matt. 5. 3-12).

79. **What Old Testament laws are in force in this kingdom?**

The Ten Commandments.

EXERCISE: Repeat the Ten Commandments (See pp. 90, 91).

80. **What "Golden Rule" did Jesus ask us to follow?**

"Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, even so do ye also unto them" (Matt. 7. 12).

81. **What new commandment did Jesus give us?**

"Love your enemies, do good to them that hate you" (Luke 6. 27; see also John 13. 34).

82. **In what two commandments are all the laws of the kingdom of God combined?**

"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind," and "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" (Matt. 22. 37, 39).

EXERCISE: Repeat or read 1 Corinthians, Chapter 13.

83. **What is the prayer of those who belong to the kingdom?**

The Lord's Prayer (Matt. 6. 9-13).

84. **Is it necessary to belong to this kingdom?**

Yes; Jesus said, "Seek ye first his kingdom, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matt. 6. 33).

## THE KINGDOM OF GOODNESS

The Jews were looking for a great king to conquer the hated Romans, and to establish for them a Jewish world-kingdom. After Jesus had fed the five thousand with five loaves and two fishes, they tried eagerly to make him king. But Jesus refused. He was a King, but not the king they wanted. His kingdom was a **kingdom of goodness**; he called it **"the kingdom of God."**

This kingdom is **in the hearts of men.** Its citizens are those who have the spirit of kindness, love, humility, justice, and mercy. Its law is "the Golden Rule." Its growth is not by the sword, but by the attractiveness and power of love.

It is becoming a kingdom of **world-wide brotherhood**—all are to work for each and each for all. Whether white or black, rich or poor, through it all men are to be brothers. Everyone is to have an opportunity to know God, and to be free, useful, and happy.

For ages men had dreamed of a "golden age" of happiness in the distant future, but Jesus started to make it **real** by beginning a reign of joy, peace, and good will among men. Each of us should **daily do his share** to bring about this kingdom by being kind and unselfish, obedient and helpful in the home, at school, on the street, and everywhere we go. We cannot make the whole world follow Jesus, but he expects us to have the kingdom of love and of goodness in our hearts and in all our words and actions. Let us pray daily, **"Thy kingdom come"**; and also be sure to do our part to make that prayer come true.

**"Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so on earth."**—Matt. 6. 10.

## LESSON XI

## THINGS TO COME

**85. What is death?**

Death is the departure of the soul from the body.

**86. Is death a calamity to the Christian?**

No; through death the faithful Christian is transferred from the kingdom of God on earth to the kingdom of God in heaven (1 John 3. 1, 2; 1 Pet. 1. 3, 4).

"Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy victory? O death, where is thy sting?" (1 Cor. 15. 54, 55).

**87. How did Jesus describe heaven?**

Jesus described heaven as, "My Father's house," in which there "are many mansions" (John 14. 2).

EXERCISE: Repeat John 14. 1-6; also read the symbolic description of the new heaven in Rev. 21. 1 to 22. 5.

**88. What promise of future joy and usefulness does Jesus give to his faithful followers in one of his parables?**

"Well done, good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will set thee over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord" (Matt. 25. 23).

EXERCISE: Read Matthew, Chapter 25.

**89. What is the fate of the wicked when they die?**

They must suffer the consequences of their sins.

"Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" (Gal. 6. 7).

**90. Who is to be the Judge of all men?**

Jesus is the final Judge of all men (Acts 10. 42; 2 Tim. 4. 1).

**91. What is the supreme purpose of our Lord Jesus Christ?**

It is Christ's great purpose to fully establish his kingdom on earth, as well as in heaven.

**92. Can this great purpose fail?**

It cannot fail, for Jesus must reign until he has overcome all his enemies (1 Cor. 15. 25).

"The kingdom of the world is become the kingdom of our Lord, and of his Christ: and he shall reign forever and ever" (Rev. 11. 15).

## OUR FUTURE

Life is sweet. The one thing we put off as long as possible is death. To those who do not know Jesus Christ death must seem terrible. But it is different with the friends of our Lord; for he arose from the dead full of glory, joy, and power, and robbed death of its terror. Now we know that because he lives we shall also **live with him after death.**

One main reason why men fear death is on account of the **judgment.** We must answer to God for the thoughts and the deeds of our lives, whether good or evil. Jesus is to be the final Judge of all men. He is impartial, just, and kind; he knows the human heart and sees all that is good and all that is evil in it. **His judgment is that of holy love.**

The outcome of life is **heaven or hell.** We dread even to think of hell, and wish there were no such place or condition. Yet heaven and hell are alike real, and both begin here in the hearts of men. Hell is a kingdom of evil, selfishness, hatred, and bitterness; heaven a kingdom of love, goodness, and service.

Heaven must surely be a wonderful place, better than any of us deserve. Best of all, it is our Father's house, and Christ, who knows just what is good for us and how to make us useful and happy, reigns there. Those who are true to him here have nothing to fear. For them **to die means to go home.**

**"Beloved, now are we children of God, and it is not yet made manifest what we shall be. We know that, if he shall be manifested, we shall be like him; for we shall see him even as he is."**—1 John 3. 2.

## b. HELPS TO THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

The Means of Grace
The Church, The Bible, Worship and Prayer,
The Sacraments

## THE MEANS OF GRACE

There are thousands of things which can be of help to us in our Christian life: the beauty of nature, a Christian home, good companions, fine schools, our work, and our play.

But there are some **helps which every Christian needs.** These are the Church, the Bible, Christian worship and prayer, and the Sacraments.

The joy, the peace, and the strength with which the Holy Spirit fills our hearts are often called "grace." For this reason the great helps of our Christian life are called the **"means of grace."** Our General Rules speak of them also as "ordinances of God," because God has commanded us to use them.

Some people think that when they pray, read the Bible, or go to church they are doing something for God and are entitled to a reward. They totally misunderstand the purpose of the "means of grace." When a physical director instructs you to take certain physical exercises daily, you follow his directions not for his benefit, but to develop your body. When your parents call you to dinner, you eat, not chiefly to please them, but because you are hungry and need food. Just so we are to use the "means of grace," not only to please God, but to **build up the spiritual life** and to **develop a Christian character** both in ourselves and in others, and this is **well pleasing to God.**

## LESSON XII

## THE CHURCH

**93. Who founded the Church?**

Jesus Christ founded the Church by calling and training the apostles and his other disciples.

**94. Who comprise the Church of Christ on earth?**

The Church of Christ is composed of Christian believers who are banded together to worship God and to carry on Christ's work.

**95. What is the special work of the Church?**

To proclaim the gospel, to teach Christian truth, to lead men to the Saviour, and to provide for public worship and the sacraments.

**96. What other equally important task has the Church?**

To promote the spirit of brotherhood among men, combat sin and evil in every form, and to apply the teaching of Jesus to daily life.

EXERCISE: Read or repeat Romans, Chapter 12.

**97. When and where did the Christian Church begin its work?**

At Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost.

EXERCISE: Read Acts 2. 41-47.

**98. What is meant by the "holy catholic Church" in the Apostles' Creed?**

The one universal Church of Christ which includes all the separate branches, or denominations, of Christian believers. (Eph. 4. 4, 5; 1 Cor. 12. 4-27).

**99. Who is now the head of the church?**

Jesus Christ is the Head of the Church, and he will always be its true Leader (Col. 1. 18).

**100. Is it our duty to belong to the Church?**

It is the sacred duty of everyone to be an active member of the Church.

**101. Will the Church on earth ever be abolished?**

No; so long as men need God they will need the Church to aid them to know and to love him.

## ORGANIZED CHRISTIANITY

When Jesus was on earth he gathered about him a group of disciples, who lived with him like a family. They assisted him wherever they could, but his main purpose in having them go with him was to train them so that they might be able to **continue his work** after his death and resurrection. This was the beginning of Christ's Church.

There is an invisible Church of Christ which includes all those who love and obey our Lord both in heaven and on earth. But the visible Church of Christ on earth is made up of **Christian people** who are **organized for** the purpose of carrying on **Christ's work.** It is often called the "household of faith"; for it is like a great religious family with Christ as its Head. Its members differ greatly in many ways, but they are bound together by Christian love and a common purpose. The Church trains and baptizes the children, it calls upon all men to believe in God and worship him, it teaches his Word, administers the sacraments, helps the needy, and comforts the sorrowing. Every Christian needs a **"church home"** with its training, its companionships, its helpfulness, and its watchful care.

Temperance societies are organized to promote the temperance cause, literary societies to create a love for literature, scientific societies to advance science. **The Church is Christ's society to promote Christianity.** Its business is to proclaim his gospel to the whole world and to establish his kingdom on earth. The Church is likewise the **champion of human rights and brotherhood.** It aims to minister to all mankind.

It is the duty of all who love the Lord Jesus to join his Church and to work faithfully therein. It is his great agency for accomplishing his work. Loyalty to Christ involves loyalty to the Church.

**"And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread and the prayers."**—Acts 2. 42.

## LESSON XIII

## THE BIBLE

**102. Why is the Bible called the "Holy" and the "Sacred" Scriptures?**

The Bible is holy, because it contains the Word of God.

**103. How was the Bible given to us?**

The books of the Bible were written by holy men inspired of God.

**104. How is the Bible divided?**

Into the Old Testament and the New Testament. The Old Testament contains 39 books, and the New Testament 27 books.

**105. What is the difference between the Old and the New Testament?**

The Old Testament contains the sacred writings of God's chosen people before the coming of Christ, and the New Testament those of his Church after Christ's coming.

**106. Who decided what books should become a part of the Bible?**

Ezra and other devout scribes before Christ, gradually selected and collected the books of the Old Testament, and the leaders of the Church in the second century gathered together the books of the New Testament.

**107. How are we to regard the Bible?**

As a message and a revelation of God to us.

"Every scripture inspired of God is also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness; that the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work" (2 Tim. 3. 16, 17).

EXERCISE: Select ten choice verses about God's Word in the 119th Psalm.

**108. What is our duty regarding the Bible?**

We should read the Bible daily, commit parts of it to memory, and, above all, obey it.

"Blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it" (Luke 11. 28).

EXERCISE: Name some of your favorite chapters in the Bible.

## OUR GUIDEBOOK

Great travelers, like Livingstone and Stanley, have written books about the strange lands and people they visited for the guidance of other travelers. The **Bible is our Guidebook,** written by God's great travelers in the region of faith and truth.

It is a library of sixty-six books. Each shows in its own way the **progress of God's revelation** of himself to his people from the earliest days until the death of the apostles.

This library, written by holy men under the influence of the Holy Spirit, was **gradually collected.** Some books of the Old Testament were at first little known, but in time their value and character became clear to zealous scribes, who copied them, bound them together with other sacred books, and read them to the people on the Sabbath. In much the same way the New Testament was selected and used by those who treasured the writings of the apostles and their fellow workers.

The Old Testament was originally written in Hebrew, the New Testament in Greek, but Christian scholars have translated the Scriptures into many other languages. William Tyndale died at the stake in 1536 for translating the Bible into modern English and for printing it.

**The Bible reveals God in the holiest thoughts** of the holiest men, and the same Holy Spirit who stirred the hearts of the writers, also kindles the souls of the reverent readers of the Bible. The prophets often said, "Thus saith the Lord," for they spoke in God's name. **The Bible is God's message** and the Word of Life to us. Let us diligently study it with reverence and faith.

**"Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."—** Matt. 4. 4.

## LESSON XIV

## WORSHIP AND PRAYER

**109. What is worship?**

To worship is to lift our thoughts to God through song, prayer, praise, meditation, or the reading of God's Word.

EXERCISE: Repeat Psalms 100 and 103.

**110. Why do we worship?**

To glorify God, to acknowledge our dependence upon him, and to realize his holy, helpful presence with us.

"Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matt. 18. 20).

**111. What does true worship require?**

True worship requires earnest attention, reverence, faith, and love toward God.

"God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship in spirit and truth" (John 4. 24).

**112. Where and when should we worship?**

We should worship God in our hearts always, by acts of devotion daily in the home, and regularly in the church.

**113. Is the Sunday school a service of worship?**

The Sunday school should be made worshipful as well as instructive, but it does not take the place of the church service.

**114. What is prayer?**

Prayer is offering the desire of our heart to our heavenly Father according to his will.

**115. Why should we pray?**

Because God is our Father, and we are in constant need.

**116. Is it necessary to pray often?**

A Christian should pray every day at regular hours and often at other times.

EXERCISE: How often does the Gospel of Luke tell us that Jesus prayed? Read the story of Daniel's fixed habit of prayer (Daniel, Chapter 6).

**117. Does God answer our prayers?**

Yes; God hears our prayer if we pray in the right spirit. He answers, though not always in the way we expect.

EXERCISE: Commit to memory Matt. 7. 7-11.

EXERCISE: Commit to memory the 67th Psalm.

## OUR SPIRITUAL LIFE

**The spirit of worship is contagious.** Just as our hearts are thrilled with patriotic feelings when we sing a great national hymn, so in true worship the worshipers are lifted together into holy thought and sacred emotions.

It is our spiritual exercise which we must never neglect. We develop our love of song by singing, our love of books by reading, and we grow in spiritual life by worship. **Through it we receive God's grace** and the assurance of his holy, loving Presence. **Worship is the opening of our souls to God** by prayer, praise, testimony, or meditation. We may worship in the home, at church, or anywhere; but it requires reverent attention and a sincere, earnest heart. To talk, fidget, or put our mind on other things during worship is unbecoming to any Christian and cannot please God.

**Prayer is reverent conversation with God.** Early one morning a student unlocked the college library with a latchkey. As he opened the door he saw his professor kneeling at the desk in prayer. Instantly he withdrew, feeling that he had intruded on something most sacred.

God listens to every sincere, earnest prayer and he answers in his own good way. Some have compared prayer to wireless telegraphy; it is like that, except that God is not far away, but near, like a good friend who is unseen but whose presence you feel.

Jesus lived a **life of prayer,** and he urges us to pray. Our spiritual life depends upon our habit of prayer and worship.

**"They that wait for Jehovah shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint."**—Isa. 40. 31.

## LESSON XV

## THE SACRAMENTS

**118. What is a sacrament?**

A sacrament is a special symbol given us by Jesus to aid us in receiving his grace and to fix holy purposes in our hearts.

**119. How many sacraments are there?**

There are two sacraments: (1) Baptism, and (2) the Lord's Supper, or the Communion Service.

**120. What is the symbol of baptism?**

Water applied in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

**121. What is the spiritual purpose of baptism?**

Baptism is to assure us that Christ accepts us in his kingdom; it is also a symbol of the cleansing of the heart (Acts 19. 2-6).

**122. What holy vow, or covenant, do we make at baptism?**

We sacredly pledge ourselves to live a Christian life and to keep the commandments of God.

**123. What is the significance of infant baptism?**

The parents consecrate the child to God and pledge themselves to give it a Christian training. The Church likewise accepts the care of the child.

**124. When do those baptized in infancy make their own baptismal vow?**

When they are received into the full membership of the Church.

**125. What visible symbols are used at the Lord's Supper?**

Bread and wine, used to symbolize the death of Christ.

EXERCISE: Read Luke 22. 14-23.

**126. What is the special spiritual value of the Lord's Supper?**

The sacrament of the Lord's Supper prompts us to repent of our sins, and helps us to feel that Jesus is our personal Saviour and that he is truly present with us. (1 Cor. 11. 23-29).

EXERCISE: Read the "General Confession," which is a part of the Communion Service. (See page 91).

**127. Why is the Lord's Supper called the "Communion Service"?**

Because it expresses and promotes brotherly love among the members of Christ's family.

## OUR COVENANT SYMBOLS

Friendship and love are not only expressed in words, but fixed and sealed by beautiful symbols. Jesus gave his followers two great **covenant symbols,** or sacraments; namely, **baptism** and the **Lord's Supper.**

Baptism is to **seal** the covenant, or sacred pledge, by which **you accept Christ** and **Christ and his Church accept you.** Philip preached the gospel to an earnest Ethiopian on the road to Gaza. This man believed the message, and Philip immediately baptized him (Acts 8. 25-39). That act meant that the gospel was for him **personally,** and that he was now received and **recognized** as a Christian, while he on his part was **solemnly pledged to live** a Christian life. No wonder he went on his way rejoicing. Our baptism should mean much the same thing to us.

After supper on the night before his death Jesus took bread, broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, "This is my body, which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me." Then he passed the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood." The Lord's Supper is, therefore, a loving act **in memory of the death of Jesus,** and a **renewal of our covenant** to love and serve him even unto death. Its purpose is to express in a visible way the fact that each of us has a **personal share** in the Saviour's life and sacrifice, and that he is truly present with us. It is likewise a **confession** that we receive our spiritual life through him and a **testimony** of the brotherly love and fellowship of the children of God.

The Communion Service is the **most sacred service** of the Church. Let us always come to it **with a penitent, grateful, and expectant spirit.**

**"And he died for all, that they that live should no longer live unto themselves, but unto him who for their sakes died and rose again."**—2 Cor. 5. 15.

## PART SECOND—THE CHURCH

### a. THE CHURCH OF THE PAST

A Factor in World History

Pentecost and the Apostolic Church, The Early Gentile Church, The Middle Ages, The Reformation, Modern Christianity, The Creeds of Protestantism, The Beginnings of Methodism, Methodism in America

## THE CHURCH, A FACTOR IN WORLD HISTORY

All history is now dated from the *most significant* **of all human events,** the birth of Christ. We say, for example, that Rome was founded B. C. (before Christ) 753; Constantinople fell A. D. (*"Anno Domini,"* in the year of our Lord) 1453. **Jesus is the center of the history** of the world, and his Church has become a mighty factor in shaping the life and the destiny of the nations.

The Church itself has a most interesting history which is interwoven with the world history; you cannot fully comprehend the one without the other.

An intelligent Christian should know at least a few facts about the development of the Church from the time when it was a little friendly circle of disciples to the present when we see clearly its **world-wide scope and influence.** It is also good for us to know something about **the cost of the great religious privileges** we enjoy. We will therefore briefly study the Early Church, the Middle Ages, the Reformation, and the Beginnings of Methodism both in England and in America.

The lesson on the Protestant creeds is inserted because these can best be understood as the outcome of the great doctrinal and political struggles of the past.

## LESSON I

## PENTECOST AND THE APOSTOLIC CHURCH

1. **What book gives the history of the early Christian Church?**
   The book of Acts.
2. **When and how were the disciples at Jerusalem enabled to begin the work of the Church?**
   On the day of Pentecost the disciples were filled with the Holy Spirit and with power.
3. **What was accomplished on the day of Pentecost?**
   About three thousand people were converted.
4. **Where did the first Christians at Jerusalem worship?**
   In the temple and in private homes.
5. **What kind of people formed the mother Church in Jerusalem?**
   They were all Jewish people who were zealous for both the gospel and the Jewish religion.
6. **Who were the leaders of the mother Church in Jerusalem?**
   At first Peter and the other apostles. Later James, the brother of Jesus.
7. **Did the Jews accept Jesus as their Messiah and Saviour?**
   Many accepted Jesus as their Messiah and Saviour, but the Jewish nation as a whole rejected him.
8. **Did the Jews persecute the early Christians?**
   Yes, at times. Some Christians were imprisoned and others were put to death.
9. **What question disturbed and perplexed the early Jewish Christians?**
   Whether, in order to become a Christian, it was necessary to accept and keep the Jewish law.
10. **How was this question settled?**
    By the rapid growth of the Gentile Church, and a conference of the leaders at Jerusalem which decided that Gentile Christians should be free from the Jewish law. (Acts, Chapter 15.)
11. **What great national calamity disrupted the mother Church at Jerusalem?**
    The revolt of the Jews against the Romans, which ended in the destruction of Jerusalem (A. D. 70).

## THE CHURCH AT JERUSALEM

At Pentecost the Church started its work with a joy like that of heaven; for the disciples at Jerusalem were **filled with the Holy Spirit,** and they began to preach with such power that three thousand people were converted on that day. The disciples told the gospel story from house to house. They had their evening meals in groups together, and gladly shared whatever they had, one with another; for they were **all of one accord.** (Acts, Chapter 2.)

The unbelieving Jews usually tolerated the Christians, but sometimes they persecuted them. The leaders twice threw Peter and John into prison. Later Stephen, because of his bold preaching, was stoned to death, and Saul bitterly persecuted the Christians. Consequently, the Church was scattered, but **wherever a Christian went, he became a missionary** (Acts, Chapters 4 to 8).

The mother Church at Jerusalem was made up of Jews. It was hard for these Jewish Christians to feel that men might become Christians without accepting the Jewish religion, but Paul was so successful among the Greeks that soon the **Gentile Christians outnumbered** the Jewish converts.

When Peter left Jerusalem to work elsewhere, James, the brother of Jesus, became the leader of the Church. James was a great favorite with all the Jews; for he was as zealous for the law as for the gospel, but at last a high priest had him arrested, condemned, and stoned to death (62 A. D.).

When the Jews rebelled against the Romans, the Christians reluctantly left Jerusalem just before it was besieged, and went to Pella. The Jewish Church was shattered by the destruction of Jerusalem, but **its work was not in vain,** for it started the great Gentile Church.

**"But ye shall receive power, when the Holy Spirit is come upon you: and ye shall be my witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judæa and Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."**—Acts 1. 8.

## LESSON II

## THE EARLY GENTILE CHURCH

12. **Who was the leader of the Gentile Church?**
The apostle Paul, who once was Saul the persecutor.

13. **What did Paul accomplish?**
He planted the Church in Asia Minor, Macedonia, Greece, and elsewhere. He also was the great defender of the rights of the Gentile Christians.

EXERCISE: Name the thirteen epistles of Paul found in the New Testament.

14. **What cities were the great centers of the Gentile Church at the close of the first century?**
Antioch, Ephesus, Corinth, Alexandria, and Rome.

15. **Who were some of the foremost defenders and thinkers of the early Church?**
Justin Martyr; Irenæus of Lyons; Tertullian of Carthage; Origen, of Alexandria; Jerome, who translated the Bible into Latin; and Augustine.

16. **What did the Church of the second and the third centuries accomplish?**
It made many converts, spread the gospel from India to the British Isles, circulated the New Testament, defeated a number of false teachers, trained a regular ministry, and began to build churches.

17. **Was the Gentile Church persecuted?**
Yes; it was at first opposed by the Jews and later persecuted by the Roman government.

18. **Who were some of the worst persecutors?**
The Roman emperors: Nero (65-68), Domitian (81-96), Decius (249-251), Valerian (257-260), and Diocletian and Galerius (303-311).

19. **What was the effect of these persecutions?**
Some Christians denied their Lord, but thousands remained faithful in spite of torture and death. Through persecution the Church was kept pure, and even strengthened and increased.

20. **Who were some of the martyrs?**
Nearly all the apostles, and Polycarp, Ignatius, Justin, Cyprian, and Perpetua.

21. **How did the Roman persecutions come to an end?**
Constantine the Great became a Christian and abolished persecution in A. D. 311.

## THREE CENTURIES OF GROWTH AND PERSECUTION

Many earnest Greeks and Romans left their own pagan gods and turned to the Jewish religion for help and hope. They attended the synagogues and sometimes accepted the Jewish law. When Paul, on his missionary journeys, preached in the synagogues, these devout Gentiles gladly received the gospel. The success of Paul's missionary efforts among the Gentiles embittered the Jews against him, but he nevertheless planted the Church in many important cities of the Roman empire.

The **Gentile Church had much with which to contend.** Many converts soon slipped back into their old habits; others were attracted to strange teachings akin to theosophy (Gnosticism). Some thought that the Church was too strict; others, that it was not strict enough (Montanists). Still the Christians lived much **purer and better lives than other people,** and the Church did a wonderful missionary work. Before the end of the third century the gospel had been preached from India to the British Isles.

The Gentile Church was tested also by **persecution;** for the Roman empire lifted its mighty sword against the Christians. To turn suspicion away from himself, the emperor Nero basely accused the Christians of setting Rome on fire, and many Christians were put to a cruel death. A Roman emperor prohibited Christianity about A. D. 80, and for more than two hundred years persecutions were common. But **the Church grew in the midst of persecution.** At last the emperor Constantine the Great was converted. He claimed to have seen, just before a battle, a vision of a cross with the inscription, "By This Sign Conquer." He placed the cross above the Roman standards and forbade the persecution of Christians.

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**"Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee the crown of life."**—Rev. 2. 10.

## LESSON III

## THE MIDDLE AGES

**22. How did the Church succeed when it was favored by the Roman emperors?**

It prospered outwardly, but gradually lost much of its purity and Christian spirit.

**23. What bishops gained, in time, the greatest power?**

The bishops of Rome and of Constantinople.

**24. Who were some of the greatest bishops, or Popes, of Rome?**

Leo I, who saved Rome from the Huns; Gregory I, who sent missionaries to England; Gregory VII, who subdued a German emperor; and Innocent I, who exercised the most power.

**25. What countries were Christianized by missionaries who were under the control of the Church at Rome?**

Germany, France, England, Ireland, Sweden, and Norway.

**26. What class of people did much missionary work and had great influence in the Dark Ages?**

The monks and the nuns. They established monasteries and convents everywhere.

**27. What great religion arose in the seventh century (A. D. 622)?**

Mohammedanism, named after Mohammed, its founder.

**28. What Christian countries were conquered by Mohammedanism?**

Syria, including the Holy Land, Asia Minor, and all of North Africa, also a portion of Europe.

**29. What great struggles for the possession of the Holy Land took place with Mohammedanism?**

The Crusades, which continued for about two hundred years, but which failed to regain the Holy Land from the Mohammedans.

**30. What great division took place in the Catholic Church?**

The Western, or Roman Catholic Church, separated from the Eastern, or Greek Catholic Church, in A. D. 1054.

## THE RISE OF THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

The Church of the apostles was a simple **Christian brotherhood,** holding its meetings in private homes, but in the second century the Christians built churches and employed regular ministers. By the third century the ministry formed a so-called priesthood completely separate from the laity.

The great city churches influenced and soon controlled the churches of their provinces. In the West **the Church at Rome** was the most powerful. It had some great men as bishops. It sent out missionaries who in time evangelized most of Western Europe. Rome was the capital of the Roman empire, and when the empire fell the bishop became the center of power. Soon it was falsely claimed that Peter had founded the Church at Rome, and had been its bishop for twenty-five years, and that consequently Peter's authority belonged to the bishops, or Popes, at Rome.

In the seventh century **Mohammedanism,** the strong new religion of Arabia, swept away more than half of Eastern Christianity, but it did not seriously cripple the West. The disastrous **Crusades,** undertaken in the name of the Church, for two centuries exhausted the kings and the armies of Europe, but they strengthened the power of the Roman Popes, who had numerous orders of monks, besides the ordinary priests, to enforce their rule.

Pepin of France and others gave land to the Popes. As a result of these gifts, the Popes began their baneful attempt to control the State as well as the Church in Western Europe and made themselves the most dangerous tyrants of the Middle Ages.

Constantinople became the seat of the **Eastern Church,** but its patriarchs never gained so much power as the Roman Popes.

**"Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith Jehovah of hosts."**—Zech. 4. 6.

## LESSON IV

## THE REFORMATION

31. **Why was it necessary to reform the Church?**
The Church had drifted away from the simplicity of the gospel, and was misruled by tyrannical Popes and a corrupt priesthood.

32. **Who were some of the early reformers that tried to purify the Church?**
John Wyclif in England (c. 1324-1384), John Huss in Bohemia (1369-1415), and Savonarola in Florence (1452-1498).

33. **Who was the great leader of the Reformation in Germany?**
Martin Luther (1483-1546), an earnest monk and able professor at the Wittenberg University.

34. **What started the reform work of Luther?**
The sale of indulgences. Luther nailed ninety-five theses on the church door at Wittenberg protesting against the practice (October 31, 1517).

35. **What was the effect of Luther's protest against this abuse?**
It aroused all of Western Europe and Luther was excommunicated by the Pope.

36. **What did Luther do with the Pope's "Bull of Excommunication"?**
He burned it in the presence of the students. He also appealed to the nobles and the people of Germany against the Pope.

37. **Was Luther called to account for defying the Pope and the Church?**
He was summoned before the Diet at Worms, which outlawed him for refusing to retract.

38. **How did the Protestant princes protect Luther from his enemies?**
They hid him for fifteen months in the Wartburg, where he began his translation of the Bible into the German language (1521-1522).

39. **Where and by whom was the reform movement carried on outside of Germany?**
In Switzerland by Zwingli and Calvin; in Scotland by John Knox; in England in part by Henry VIII, who quarreled with the Pope.

40. **Where was the Reformation successful?**
In all of England, Scotland, and Scandinavia, and in a great part of the Netherlands, Germany, and Switzerland.

## BREAKING THE POWER OF THE POPE

The Pope had the entire Western Church in his power, but a *new day began to dawn.* America was discovered, the printing press invented, and "the new learning" began. The world was ready for a change.

At this time the Pope needed money to complete Saint Peter's Cathedral at Rome. So his agents everywhere sold indulgences, which the people bought as a license for sin. When John Tetzel began selling **indulgences** at Wittenberg, Germany, Martin Luther, who had found peace with God through simple faith, nailed on the church door **ninety-five declarations** against this abuse.

Luther's action started the fight against the Pope, indulgences, image worship, the mass, and the Catholic priesthood. The Pope ordered Luther to take back his statements or be put out of the Church. Luther publicly burned the order.

**All Western Europe was stirred.** Several German princes for political as well as religious reasons took sides with Luther and other reformers. After the Diet of Worms the emperor Charles V wanted to crush out the movement, but he was kept busy fighting the Turks and the French king until Protestantism was too strong to be blotted out.

Bloody persecutions and wars followed. In Spain the new faith was stamped out by the terrible Inquisition; in France the Protestant Huguenots were crushed by the Massacre of the Night of Saint Bartholomew (1572); the Protestants in the Netherlands bravely withstood the oppressions of Philip II and his cruel general, Alba, who killed eighteen thousand people; in Northern Germany Protestantism finally held its own after many struggles ending with the Thirty Years' War. **Religious liberty has been bought with a great price.**

**"For freedom did Christ set us free: stand fast therefore, and be not entangled again in a yoke of bondage."**—Gal. 5. 1.

## LESSON V

## MODERN CHRISTIANITY

**41. In what directions has Christ's kingdom made special progress since the Reformation?**

In the growth of independent denominations, in the modern missionary movement, and in the spread of the Christian spirit.

**42. What independent evangelical denominations have sprung up since the Reformation?**

The Presbyterian Church (1560), the Congregational Church (c. 1580), the Baptist Church (1612), the Methodist Church (1739), and others.

**43. When and through whom was the modern Protestant missionary movement started?**

It was started by John Eliot and David Brainerd among the American Indians (1649-1747).

**44. How far has the modern missionary movement succeeded?**

There are several million Christians among non-Christian nations, all countries are now open to the gospel, and in nearly all lands mission work has been started; however, one half of the human race has not yet heard the gospel.

**45. What great human evil has been almost entirely abolished through the influence of Christianity?**

Slavery. It was abolished in the British dominions in 1833, in America in 1863, in Brazil in 1871. Where it still exists, it is being steadily suppressed.

**46. To what special persons has modern Christianity brought new rights and blessings?**

To the women and the children and to the working classes.

**47. What is another evidence of the coming of the kingdom of God?**

The temperance and other reform movements.

**48. What effect has Christianity had on the governments of the world?**

It has made them more democratic. In every Christian land the government is considered the servant of the people.

**49. What great human rights are coming to recognition in Christian lands?**

The freedom of conscience and of thought, the right of all to equal justice, to the necessities of life, and to some leisure and comfort.

## CHRISTIAN PROGRESS

Since the Reformation the Church and Christ's kingdom have constantly advanced. The whole Western hemisphere has become civilized and largely Christianized. **Everywhere are signs of progress.**

Until recently every country in Europe had an "established" or "state" Church, supported and controlled by the government, such as the Anglican Church in England and the state Church in Germany. But in Great Britain and elsewhere **progressive independent denominations** have sprung up, which now have many millions of members and have become recognized as among the great Christian forces in the world. There is no state Church in the United States.

Another sign of progress is the **world-wide Protestant missionary movement,** which started in the early Colonial days among the Indians. In time a few heroic men ventured into foreign fields. Missionary work was started in India by the Dutch (1706) and by William Carey (1793); in the West Indies by Thomas Coke (1786); in China by Robert Morrison (1807); in Burmah by Adoniram Judson (1813). To-day the names of pioneer missionaries like David Livingstone are greater than those of kings. One half the world has already heard of Jesus, and the day soon should come when **every human being** will have an opportunity to **know and accept our Saviour.**

Christianity is **leavening the world** with the spirit of Christ. At the Reformation the world was full of slaves, religious intolerance was universal, men were imprisoned for debt, hanged for small offenses, and were victims of cruelty. Women and children were regarded inferior to men. To-day slavery is almost abolished, religious freedom prevails, and cruelty is intolerable to Christian nations; mighty reforms are in progress. The rights of women and children are respected. The sacredness of human life and the rights of the toilers are generally acknowledged; even the welfare of criminals receives consideration. **The kingdom of God is** slowly but surely **coming on the earth.**

**"Of the increase of his government and of peace there shall be no end."**—Isa. 9. 7.

## LESSON VI

### THE CREEDS OF PROTESTANTISM

**50. What is a creed?**

A creed is a brief, official statement of the important teachings of a Church.

**51. What creed is used by both Protestants and Catholics?**

The Apostles' Creed.

EXERCISE: Repeat the Apostles' Creed (page 90).

**52. Why is it called the Apostles' Creed?**

Because it is the oldest creed in use, and some of its clauses probably date back to the days of the apostles.

**53. What is meant by the clause, "I believe in the holy catholic Church"?**

The word "catholic" here means "general," or "universal." It does not refer to the Roman or to the Greek Catholic Church.

**54. What claims and usages of the Roman Catholic Church do Protestants reject?**

Protestants deny the authority of the Pope and the necessity of a priesthood; they reject the mass and the worship of the Virgin Mary and of images.

**55. What great teachings did all the reformers emphasize?**

That we are saved by faith alone, that every Christian is a priest of God, and that the Bible is the sufficient rule and only safe guide for Christian faith and conduct.

**56. In what historical statement are the general teachings of Protestantism to be found?**

In the Twenty-five Articles of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

EXERCISE: Read the Central Teachings of the Twenty-five Articles (pages 93, 94).

**57. How did we get the Twenty-five Articles of Religion?**

John Wesley abbreviated the Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England and adapted them for the use of the Methodists in America.

**58. How old are the Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England?**

They were written and adopted at the time of the English Reformation (1552-1563).

## OUR ARTICLES OF RELIGION

Sculptors carve statues of great men in marble in order to preserve their forms for future generations. In the same way, when the thinkers of an age have seen and have fought for a great truth, they try to embody it in a short, clear statement in order to safeguard it for the future. Such a statement we call a creed.

Our Twenty-five Articles of Religion are **an extended creed.** They contain some of the **fundamental beliefs** of the Church, just as the Constitution of the United States contains the fundamental laws of our land. The Constitution was adopted in 1789, our Articles of Religion in 1784. The Constitution has certain "War Amendments," which were added after the Civil War. Some of the Articles have also been called "War Articles" because they were adopted after a great struggle with error. Twelve of our Articles express the difference between the Protestant and the Roman Catholic point of view.

Our Twenty-five Articles (except Article XXIII) were sent to America by Mr. Wesley, but they were adopted for the most part by the Church of England in the days of Queen Elizabeth, and some of them were written even before England was civilized. That is why they sound so strange to us. We would hardly express our faith in the same language to-day, but we leave the Articles unchanged **because of their historical associations.**

The Twenty-five Articles set forth great Christian truths which are held in common by nearly all Protestant Churches. The Articles are printed in full in our Discipline. But a simple statement of the **central teachings** of each article is found in Part III (pages 93, 94). Study these central teachings carefully and you will probably have no difficulty in accepting them.

**"With the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."**—Rom. 10. 10.

## LESSON VII

## THE BEGINNINGS OF METHODISM

**59. Who was the founder of Methodism?**

John Wesley, born at Epworth, England, June 17, 1703, a son of Samuel and Susannah Wesley.

**60. How did the name "Methodist" originate?**

Charles and John Wesley, George Whitefield, and others formed a "Holy Club" at Oxford University (1729). They were so earnest and methodical that they were called "Method-ists" in derision.

**61. What did John Wesley do after he graduated from Oxford University?**

For two years he was his father's assistant minister, then he returned to Oxford as instructor, and in 1736 went as a missionary to Georgia.

**62. What was the outcome of Wesley's trip to America?**

He became acquainted with the Moravian Brethren, through whom he was led to seek a more definite religious experience.

**63. What marked the real origin of Methodism?**

It was the new religious experience of John Wesley, when his heart was "strangely warmed," and he received the assurance that he was saved from sin by faith (May 24, 1738).

**64. How was the Methodist Church started?**

Wesley and others preached their new experience of salvation by faith, and formed societies, or classes, for the help and the instruction of their converts.

**65. In what way did Methodist "lay" preaching originate?**

The societies multiplied so fast that the regular ministers could not serve them all, so laymen led the class meetings, and soon also preached the gospel with great power.

**66. Who were some of Wesley's chief fellow workers?**

His brother, Charles Wesley, the hymn writer; George Whitefield, the great preacher, who afterward left Wesley; John Fletcher, the defender of Methodist teachings; Adam Clarke, the great scholar; and Thomas Maxfield, a local preacher.

**67. In what countries was Methodism established before the death of Wesley in 1791?**

In England, Ireland, Scotland, and Wales, and in America.

## WESLEY AND THE GREAT AWAKENING

When the religious life of England seemed almost dead, God provided for a wonderful revival. It started in the heart of John Wesley, whose father was an earnest minister and whose mother was a **most remarkable and saintly woman.**

Trained by such a mother, and schooled at Oxford University, Wesley went to Georgia, vainly hoping to convert the Indians. But during the long stormy sea voyage to America he came in touch with the **Moravian Brethren,** a wonderful, religious people. Through Peter Boehler, one of the Moravians, Wesley was finally led to seek a **personal religious experience through faith.**

George Whitefield and John and Charles Wesley all found peace with God about the same time. Aglow with their new religious experience, they went like a flame of fire through England, **preaching salvation from sin, and holiness.** When they were barred from the churches they preached in the fields or on the streets to tens of thousands of eager listeners, and everywhere people were converted.

At first they worked with the Moravians, but they soon found it best to start an independent work. The **first Methodist Society** was organized in 1739 at Bristol, England, and during the same year the "Old Foundry" was dedicated at London as the first "Methodist Chapel." The Societies multiplied rapidly. Soon persecution broke out, but it could not stop the great revival.

Wesley and his fellow workers not only preached, but also provided aid for the sick and the poor, schools for the children, work for the unemployed, and cheap good books for the thoughtful. When Wesley died there were one hundred and twenty thousand Methodists.

**"For he was a good man, and full of the Holy Spirit and of faith: and much people was added unto the Lord."**—Acts 11. 24.

## LESSON VIII

## METHODISM IN AMERICA

68. **How did Methodism begin in America?**
Barbara Heck induced Philip Embury to begin preaching among a group of German-Irish Methodist immigrants in New York (1766).

69. **Who began preaching services in Maryland about the same time?**
Robert Strawbridge, who had been a Methodist preacher in Ireland.

70. **What picturesque character became a leader among the early Methodists of New York?**
Captain Webb, a captain in the English army, who preached and otherwise aided the little society.

71. **Which is the oldest Methodist Church in America?**
"Wesley Chapel," on John Street, New York city, erected in 1768.

72. **Did Mr. Wesley assist the Methodists in America?**
Yes; Mr. Wesley sent eight English preachers to America, and also directed the work.

73. **Who was the most prominent preacher Mr. Wesley sent to America?**
Francis Asbury (1745-1816), who preached forty-five years in America, and who was our pioneer bishop.

74. **What is the birthday of our Church?**
Christmas, December 25, 1784, when the Methodist Episcopal Church was organized in Baltimore.

75. **What took place at that time?**
The first Methodist Discipline was adopted, Francis Asbury was made bishop, and other ministers were duly ordained.

76. **Who were some of the great pioneer preachers?**
Freeborn Garrettson in Maryland and Canada, Benjamin Abbott in New Jersey and Delaware, Jesse Lee in New England, Bishop William McKendree, father of Western Methodism, and Peter Cartwright in Illinois.

77. **What question caused a great division in Methodism?**
The slavery question, which, in 1844, led to the organization of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South.

## THE PIONEERS AND THEIR SONS

One day in 1766 Barbara Heck found some of her Irish Methodist friends playing a game of cards. She seized the cards, threw them into the fire, and went straight to Philip Embury, a former local preacher, and persuaded him to begin preaching services in his own home. His first congregation consisted of five persons, but a class was organized. Before long Embury's house was too small for the congregations and a "Rigging Loft" was leased. **Thus Methodism started** in New York.

**The pioneer preachers** were soon preaching along the entire Atlantic Coast.

They were mighty men, full of zeal, riding from settlement to settlement, and changing circuits every six months. They understood pioneer life and shared its hardships. Bishop Asbury received sixty-four dollars salary a year, and traveled annually on horseback from New England to Ohio, preaching and directing the work.

The Revolutionary War for a time checked progress. When it was over, Mr. Wesley decided that there should be organized an *independent Methodist Episcopal Church in America.* He ordained Dr. Thomas Coke a bishop and sent him over to America to ordain Francis Asbury and to submit a plan of organization, which was unanimously adopted.

The work moved on by leaps and bounds. In 1773 there were eleven hundred and sixty Methodists in America; in 1784, fifteen thousand; in 1800, sixty-five thousand.

The circuit riders moved westward with the settlers. Great revivals swept the whole country. By and by Methodism began building colleges, hospitals, and orphanages. Our Church became **a great factor in the uplift of America** and now numbers nearly four million members.

**"They therefore that were scattered abroad went about preaching the word. . . . And the multitudes gave heed with one accord unto the things that were spoken."**—Acts 8. 4, 6.

## b. THE METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH

The Methodist Discipline

Our Characteristics

Our Government, Our Conferences, Our Ministry, Our Membership, Our General Rules, Our Departments of Work, Our Benevolences

## THE METHODIST DISCIPLINE

You are a Methodist preparing yourself for full membership in the Methodist Episcopal Church. You will therefore be interested in its great system of government, just as you are interested in that of your country. In the remaining lessons we will study the striking characteristics of our Church, its government, its rules, and its benevolent enterprises.

The book which contains all official information on these subjects is the **Discipline.** In it you will find our **Constitution,** consisting of the Twenty-five Articles of Religion, the General Rules, and the Articles of Organization, setting forth our form of government. In addition to this, the Discipline contains **our laws, our ritual, and the regulations** concerning the general enterprises of the Church.

The first draft of the Discipline was sent to America by Mr. Wesley, and it was adopted at the Christmas Conference in 1784. Since then a new edition has been published after each General Conference. The General Conference of itself cannot alter the Constitution, but so far as may seem wise, it modifies any other section of the Discipline.

## LESSON IX

## OUR CHARACTERISTICS

**78. Has Methodism any special features which distinguish it from other denominations?**

Yes; in its teachings, its usages, its government, and its spirit.

**79. What are some of our distinctive teachings?**

The doctrines of a universal gospel, of free will, of assurance, and of perfect love.

**80. What is the doctrine of a universal gospel and of free will?**

That through Jesus Christ God has provided salvation for all men, so that whosoever will may be saved from sin.

**81. What is meant by the doctrine of assurance, or the witness of the Spirit?**

That whosoever is a Christian may know that fact in his own heart and spirit.

**82. What is the doctrine of perfect love, or sanctification?**

That a Christian may by grace be cleansed from all sin and love God with all his heart and his neighbor as himself.

EXERCISE: Read the Ten Doctrines of Grace emphasized by our Church (see page 95).

**83. What characteristic usages have been a great power in Methodism?**

The class meeting, the love feast, and the watch-night service.

**84. What are two of the peculiarities of our form of church government?**

An itinerant, or traveling, ministry, and a system of universal supervision.

**85. Who are some of the distinctive officers of our Church?**

Bishops, or general superintendents, district superintendents, local preachers, and class leaders.

**86. What spirit has usually marked our church life?**

The spirit of earnest evangelism, of active practical Christian service, and of democracy and brotherhood.

## WHY WE ARE METHODISTS

Most of us are Methodists because we have been brought up in our Church. But there are many people who have joined the Methodist Church because it emphasizes the things on which the apostles laid stress and because it is the most helpful to them in their religious life.

Methodism insists on a few great truths and allows perfect **freedom of thought** as to all the rest. Wesley said, "We think and let think."

Methodism proclaims that the **gospel is for all men** without any exception, and that whosoever will may be saved from sin. (For ages this was questioned by honest but mistaken Christians.)

Methodism has preached from the beginning, "You must be born again." Our Church seeks to lead all its people to a **Christian experience** and to an assurance that they are truly children of God.

Methodism lays stress on a **holy life.** Mr. Wesley preached the need of perfect love to God and to our fellow men. We dare not aim at anything less, for Jesus asks us to be "perfect" as our "Father in heaven is perfect."

Methodism is **social and democratic** in its spirit; it welcomes all, whether rich or poor, educated or ignorant. It tries to make every one feel "at home."

Methodism is aggressive in its **fight against evil.** It does not compromise with wrong and does oppose worldliness in every form.

Methodism is a **world-wide brotherhood** at work in almost every part of the earth. It is the largest of the Protestant denominations.

Our government is a system of **careful universal supervision.** This gives us the strength of a great army.

It is a privilege to belong to such a Church.

**"And let the favor of the Lord our God be upon us; And establish thou the work of our hands upon us; Yea, the work of our hands establish thou it."**

—Psa. 90. 17.

## LESSON X

## OUR CONFERENCES

**87. What Conferences are an indispensable part of our Church government?**

The Quarterly Conference, the Annual Conference, and the General Conference.

**88. What is the Quarterly Conference?**

The Quarterly Conference is the governing body of the local church. It meets from two to four times a year. The district superintendent is its chairman.

**89. Who compose the Quarterly Conference?**

The pastor, local and retired preachers, exhorters, stewards, and, when approved by the Quarterly Conference, the class leaders, trustees, and the heads of each department of the local church. (See Discipline.)

**90. What is the relation of the trustees, the Sunday school, the Epworth League, and of all the other organizations of the Church to the Quarterly Conference?**

They all report to the Quarterly Conference, and are under its direct control.

**91. What is the Annual Conference?**

It comprises a group of ministers in charge of the work of the Church in a fixed territory. It meets annually and is presided over by a bishop.

**92. What does the Annual Conference do?**

It examines the character of each minister, reviews the work of the year, examines and receives candidates for the ministry, and receives the appointments for the next year.

**93. What is the General Conference?**

It is composed of delegates from the entire Church, one half of whom are ministers, the other half laymen. It meets once every four years.

**94. What is the work of the General Conference?**

It makes all the laws of the Church, reviews the work of the bishops and other officials, and elects new bishops and other officers.

## METHODIST SUPERVISION

The Methodist Church has **a great system of government,** resembling that of the United States. The Union consists of forty-eight States (1914); our Church is composed of more than one hundred and twenty-five Annual Conferences. Every State has numerous cities, each with its own mayor; every Annual Conference has many congregations, each with a pastor in charge. Congress is made up of representatives and senators elected by the people to make their laws; and we have a General Conference to make our Church laws. This General Conference meets once in four years, and is made up of delegates, one half of whom are ministers chosen by the ministers, and the other half are laymen elected by the laymen. The bishops preside in turn in the daily sessions of the General Conference. Its meetings usually continue throughout the month of May.

We have a system of **complete supervision.** The Quarterly Conference controls the work of the local church. It consists of the local preachers, stewards, trustees, and other officers of the Church, such as Sunday school superintendent, president of the Epworth League, president of the Ladies' Aid Society. All the departments of the Church report to the Quarterly Conference. There is a somewhat similar oversight of the work of a district, of the Annual Conference, and of the general Church boards. **Every officer** of the Church **must give an account** to some one over him. Every pastor and district superintendent reports to the Annual Conference, and the bishops and other general officers, to the General Conference.

Careful supervision promotes efficiency. The weakest member is carefully protected in his rights, and the needs of all receive consideration. Every dollar is accounted for, and any success or failure is soon noticed. **This system has helped to make our Methodism a success.**

**"Admonish the disorderly, encourage the faint-hearted, support the weak, be longsuffering toward all."**—1 Thess. 5. 14.

## LESSON XI

## OUR MINISTRY

**95. What kinds of preachers are there in the Methodist Church?**

Two; local preachers and traveling preachers.

**96. What is a local preacher?**

A man who is licensed to preach by a local church, and is not a member of an Annual Conference.

**97. What classes of ordained ministers have we?**

Two; deacons and elders. After a series of examinations and a period of service, ministers may be solemnly consecrated, first as deacons and then as elders.

**98. What is meant by a "preacher on trial"?**

All our ministers must serve two years on trial before they are admitted to full membership in an Annual Conference.

**99. What is meant by traveling preachers?**

Pastors, district superintendents, and other ministers who give their whole time to the work of the ministry and are members or probationers of an Annual Conference.

**100. Why are they called traveling preachers?**

Because they annually receive their appointments from the bishop.

**101. What ministers are the highest officers of our Church?**

The bishops, or general superintendents, who have charge of all the churches and the ministers.

**102. Who assist the bishops in their oversight of the work?**

The district superintendents, whose duty it is to direct the work of the districts, each of which is composed of a number of churches.

**103. Who is to direct the work of the local church?**

The pastor.

**104. What is our duty toward our ministers?**

To respect their high and sacred calling, and to cooperate with them in every possible way.

## MEN CALLED OF GOD

Every true minister is called of God. Men may choose other vocations simply according to their liking and ability, but Methodists want **ministers that know they are called** of God to preach.

Our Church has had a splendid host of noble, zealous **local preachers,** who earned their bread by some regular occupation during the week and preached the gospel for the love of it on Sunday. Methodism could never have become what it is without them.

Our regular ministers are called **itinerants**; for they go from place to place as they are sent. When they join the Conference they pledge themselves to go, like soldiers, wherever the bishop appoints them. The appointments are made annually, still some pastors have been reappointed to the same charge for ten or fifteen years.

Our ministers are **solemnly ordained.** The candidates make a very sacred pledge, then, after prayer, the bishop and several elders lay their hands upon their heads and authorize them to do the work of the ministry. Deacon's orders are received first, then, usually two years later, the elder's orders.

**The character of every Methodist minister is passed upon** at least once a year, and if he should do wrong, anyone could at any time bring charges against him.

Every one of us should love and honor his pastor. He deals with the most sacred things in our lives and we could not dishonor him without injuring our own souls.

**Trust your pastor.** You can talk to him freely. He will gladly help you. Coöperate with him; never speak ill of him, and always pray for him.

**"Now therefore we are all here present in the sight of God, to hear all things that have been commanded thee of the Lord."**—Acts 10. 33.

## LESSON XII

## OUR MEMBERSHIP

**105. How many kinds of members are there in our Church?**

Two; preparatory members and full members.

**106. What is preparatory membership?**[1]

Preparatory membership in our Church is a relation preceding full membership, for the purpose of instruction in the principles of Christianity in general and in the tenets of Methodism in particular.

**107. What two classes of preparatory members have we?**

Baptized children to form, when ready, a junior class; and adults, preparing themselves to take their church covenant.

**108. Do we receive people from other evangelical denominations into our Church?**

Yes; if they will answer the questions asked of those coming into full membership in the Church.

**109. In what three ways do people discontinue their membership in our Church?**

By withdrawal, expulsion, or by death.

**110. Is anyone expelled from our Church without a hearing?**

No; the rights of every member are most carefully safeguarded.

**111. How are members transferred from one church to another?**

By a certificate sent by the pastor to the church that the member wishes to join.

**112. Can any member receive a church letter to keep in his possession?**

No; all certificates of transfer should be sent directly from one pastor to another. The member receives a notice of the transfer.

**113. Should our members be retained in a church after they have moved to a distant locality?**

No; their membership should be transferred immediately to a church which they will be able to attend.

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[1] The probationary relation is required as a condition precedent to reception into Full Membership. The period of probation is no longer of definite length, but the probationary (preparatory) membership is imperative.—Ruling of the Bishops, approved 1912.

## MEMBERS OF ONE BODY

The apostle Paul told the Corinthians that they were all **members of the body of Christ.** That is a fine figure. Each member of the body has its particular use and does some service for the whole. All are sustained and enriched from the same supply. They all protect each other. "Whether one member suffereth, all the members suffer with it; or one member is honored, all members rejoice with it" (see 1 Cor. 12. 12-27). They will act together for the common good.

It is to be the same in the Church. Each is to have a share in the work, each is to do his part. We are workers together with God and with one another. We are to be considerate, each of the other, and help one another, as members of the same family; and above all we are to love one another. Love "beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things" (1 Cor. 13. 7).

It is good for a child to mingle with other children in school and at play in order to learn the art of living and working with others. It is fine to see team work, especially among young people. As a member of the Church you must learn to do team work. **Never gossip, never find fault, never shirk.** Your cooperation will always count.

Remember that you are a member, not merely of a local church, but of the world-wide Methodist Church. Your church membership is good anywhere. If you move from one locality to another, be sure to transfer your membership at once to the nearest Methodist church. **Be loyal to your own Church.** Bishop Asbury said, "We live to make our own Church a power in the land, while we live to love every other Church that exalts our Christ."

**"Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ."**—Gal. 6. 2.

## LESSON XIII

## OUR GENERAL RULES

(See the General Rules abbreviated, page 92)

**114. Who wrote the General Rules of our Church?**

Mr. Wesley. They were originally intended for the use of the first Methodist societies (1739).

**115. When were they adopted in America?**

On the birthday of our Church, Christmas, 1784.

**116. What does the first section of the General Rules emphasize?**

That we are to avoid every sin, particularly those which are most commonly practiced.

**117. What are some of the sins we are to avoid?**

Swearing, Sabbath-breaking, drunkenness, quarreling, dishonesty, gossiping, and extravagance.

**118. What kind of amusements does it forbid?**

"The taking of such diversions as cannot be used in the name of the Lord Jesus."

EXERCISE: Read the "Special Advice" in regard to "Amusements" taken from the Discipline (¶ 69) page 93.

**119. What does this mean?**

That we are to avoid all amusements which we cannot enjoy in the spirit of Christ.

**120. What does the second section of our Rules impress upon us?**

That we are to do good in every possible way.

**121. What are we asked to do in the third section?**

To use diligently the means of grace.

**122. Which of the means of grace are people most apt to neglect?**

Private and family prayer and the study of the Bible.

**123. Are the General Rules stricter than the Bible?**

By no means; they only express some of the precepts of the Bible in another form.

## CHRISTIAN CONDUCT

Young Benjamin Franklin made up a list of standard virtues, which he kept constantly before his mind and tried hard to attain. In like manner Mr. Wesley framed his **General Rules for the guidance of the first Methodist converts.** They were a standard whereby they measured their shortcomings and directed their lives.

Our Church made these Rules a part of its Constitution. A few things in them might be omitted or put into other words, but we keep them unchanged because of their associations and because they set forth so clearly **the right principles of Christian conduct.**

It is more necessary to warn youth against poison ivy than against lions and tigers. It is unnecessary to forbid to a Christian things which every one condemns; but our Rules insist that a Christian should avoid all things which are harmful, even though they are commonly practiced.

The questionable amusements belong to this class. Every child ought to play as well as work, and all people need wholesome amusements. But amusements of the wrong kind do great harm. The General Rules give us the right principle. **Allow yourself only those pleasures which you can enjoy in Jesus's name.** If they are harmful or lead to temptation, if they have evil associations, or bring you into bad company, if they are likely to dull your taste for spiritual things and make you worldly, or if they set an unwise example for others, in Jesus's name avoid them. Let us try earnestly to live up to the advices found in our Discipline.

**"And whatsoever ye do, in word or in deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus."**—Col. 3. 17.

## LESSON XIV

## OUR DEPARTMENTS OF WORK

**124. What are some of the departments of work under the direct control of our Church?**

The Sunday school, the Epworth League, the Junior League, the Church Temperance Society, the deaconess work, Methodist colleges and theological schools, The Methodist Book Concern, and the great Boards conducting benevolences.

**125. Which department is for people of all ages?**

The Sunday school, which instructs both children and adults in the Bible and in all things pertaining to the Christian life.

**126. What special provision is made for the young people of the Church?**

The Epworth League, which was organized (in 1889) to train young people in Christian character-building, in social service, and in the expression of their spiritual life.

**127. What department looks especially after children from eight to sixteen years of age?**

The Junior League, which aims to develop the children into intelligent, loyal Christians and Methodists through regular courses of study and various Christian activities.

**128. What organizations seek to direct the work of the men of the Church?**

The Methodist Brotherhood, the Federation for Social Service, and the Church Temperance Society.

**129. Why has Methodism founded colleges?**

To provide for the education of the young people under wholesome, Christian influences.

**130. Does Methodism call young women to special church work in this country?**

Yes, the Church needs young women for the deaconess work.

**131. What is the purpose of The Methodist Book Concern?**

To publish and to sell Methodist literature and other good books and periodicals.

**132. What is done with the profits of the Book Concern?**

All the profits of the Book Concern are used to help support the retired ministers of the Methodist Church, and their widows and orphans.

## THE WORK AND THE WORKERS

**Methodism is well organized.** Like the United States government, our church has a number of departments of work, each with a general secretary and a host of workers. There is the Sunday school, with about 4,800,000 scholars and nearly 410,000 officers and teachers; the Epworth League, 600,000 strong, with 85,000 cabinet officers; the Junior League, with 250,000 enrolled and about 18,000 workers; while the Ladies' Aid Societies, missionary societies, schools, hospitals, orphanages, and old people's Homes keep other thousands busy. Yet almost all this work is done without money and without price by a noble army of volunteers.

The Church is **busy with many kinds of work.** When there were no colleges in the land, the Church planted them. To-day there are over one hundred Methodist colleges and other schools for higher education in the United States. The Church is also active in reform work. It is fighting intemperance and vice.

One of the great departments is the **Book Concern,** which was started in 1789 to provide the American Methodists with religious literature. It has grown with the Church and is now doing a great business. It publishes our Church papers, Sunday school periodicals, and many books. It sells any good book on the market. It is **our Concern,** and all its profits help to support our veteran ministers and their families.

Our Church has approximately 20,000 ministers, 1,700 deaconesses, and probably 500,000 unpaid helpers. Still "the harvest indeed is plenteous, but the laborers are few." **May each of us be a worker!**

**"And I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then I said, Here am I; send me."**—Isa. 6. 8.

## LESSON XV
## OUR BENEVOLENCES

**133. How does our Church carry on its benevolent enterprises?**

Through several great boards: the Board of Foreign Missions, the Board of Home Missions and Church Extension, the Board of Education with its Departments of Schools and Colleges, Church Schools, Education for Negroes, and Epworth League; the Board of Pensions and Relief, and the Board of Hospitals and Homes and Deaconess Work.

**134. What does the Board of Foreign Missions do?**

The Board of Foreign Missions is conducting our missionary work in foreign lands.

**135. What is the work of the Board of Home Missions and Church Extension?**

The Board of Home Missions confines itself to our own country. It provides funds to carry on mission work, and aids needy churches in erecting houses of worship.

**136. What is the purpose of the Board of Education?**

This Board supervises the work of the schools and colleges of our Church, and makes loans to needy students from the Children's Day fund.

**137. What does the Department of Church Schools do?**

It starts and aids Sunday schools in new and needy neighborhoods, and promotes our Sunday school work everywhere.

**138. What is the task of the Department of Education for Negroes?**

To maintain schools for the education of the colored people.

**139. What is the task of the Department of Epworth League?**

To train young people in Christian character-building, in social service and in the expression of their religious life.

**140. What is the work of the Board of Pensions and Relief?**

To aid in providing a comfortable support for our retired ministers, their widows and orphans; also for missionaries, deaconesses and other Church workers.

**141. What is the work of the Board of Hospitals and Homes and Deaconess Work?**

To establish Hospitals and Homes for the care

of the sick, the aged, and homeless children, and to develop and oversee our deaconess work and institutions.

142. **What two great societies are conducted by our Methodist women?**

The Woman's Foreign Missionary Society and the Woman's Home Missionary Society.

143. **How should we contribute to these great enterprises?**

We should contribute cheerfully, systematically, and according to our ability (Luke 6. 38).

## OUR WORLD PARISH

Jesus said, "Go ye into all the world and teach all nations." **Our Church is at this great task.** Through the Board of Foreign Missions we are doing missionary work in about one hundred different languages and dialects, in thirty-four different countries. Yet the opportunities and needs are so great that it seems utterly wrong that we are not doing more.

**In our own land** the Sunday School Department is planting schools where there are none. The Board of Education is aiding earnest young people to get an education, and the Department of Education for Negroes is carrying on work among the colored people in twenty-two schools and colleges. The Board of Home Missions and Church Extension is helping in the great crowded cities, on the long frontier, among our foreigners, in Alaska, the Philippines, Hawaii, and Porto Rico.

Then there are other worthy causes represented by our colleges, the American Bible Society, hospitals, orphanages, old people's Homes, and the like.

When one looks at these great enterprises it would seem that our Church is like Atlas, carrying the world on its shoulders. But if we should fail to do our part, millions would never get any help.

Each local church is told what is its share in supporting these enterprises, and the Church in turn looks to each member to do his part. One of the questions of the church covenant is, "Will you contribute of your earthly substance according to your ability to the support of the gospel and the various benevolent enterprises of the Church?" If you contribute liberally and systematically every Sunday, you may say truly with our founder, "The world is my parish."

**"He that soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he that soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully."**—2 Cor. 9. 6.

## LESSON XVI
## OUR STEWARDSHIP

**144. What does Christian Stewardship teach?**

That God our Father is giver and owner of all we have and are, and that we ought to serve him with life, talents, loved ones, prayers, possessions. (Read Gen. 1. 1; Hag. 2. 8; Psa. 50. 10-12; Ezek. 18. 4.)

**145. How may we acknowledge our stewardship?**

In material things, by rendering to God such proportion of our possessions as we believe he demands, and by using the remainder in ways he approves.

**146. What is the tithe?**

It is the first tenth of one's income—wages, profits, interest, allowance—laid aside regularly for the promotion of God's kingdom. It was a widespread and ancient religious observance. It was God's command to his chosen people and became the law of the Old Testament (Gen. 14. 17-20; Heb. 7. 1-8; Gen. 28. 16-22; Lev. 27. 30; 1 Cor. 16. 2).

**147. What should be the Christian's attitude toward the principle of tithing?**

He should recognize that the love of Christ constrains every loyal disciple to offer, as a cheerful giver, all that God could justly require of men in any age, and that there is doubtless no better beginning for a system of giving than that represented by the tithe.

**148. Is tithing observed in the modern church?**

Very generally by the great Christian leaders, by many wise business men, by most ministers and missionaries, and by multitudes of faithful laymen.

**149. How does tithing benefit the individual?**

It encourages system, thrift, and diligence; puts God first in business; discourages covetousness, and deepens interest in Kingdom progress (Mal. 3. 7-12).

**150. Would universal tithing benefit the Church?**

Immeasurably. If all were tithers, nearly ten times more would be given for God's service. Churches could be built, debts paid, poverty relieved, new enterprises launched, and millions of waiting heathen led to Christ. There is also universal testimony to the effect that the reaction of tithing tends to deeper spirituality and to an increased interest in God's work.

**151. May children and young people tithe?**

All who receive material blessings from God may and should acknowledge his authority and love, in loyal obedience to his will.

## STEWARDS OF GOD

The maintenance of the Centenary program, and the merging of that program into an even larger movement, both depend upon cultivating among our people a strong and sacred doctrine of Christian stewardship.

That doctrine of stewardship must have a deep place in the souls of our people. We cannot rely upon jerky impulses; we must have steady convictions.

These convictions must express themselves in a system. We must not fasten upon our people any plan that is merely legalistic. But we can urge that as the beginning of a system our people adopt the tithing principle.

There is abundant evidence that the adoption of the tithing plan makes for the constant thought of God and serves as a schoolmaster to lead us on to Christ. There are **some** among us who have gone beyond this system. Is there any reason why hundreds of thousands of our systemless givers should not start with tithing?

If one half of our wage-earners will begin to give one tenth of their incomes to the work of the Church, the Centenary program can be enlarged in a marvelous fashion.

The call of God for our Church at the present time is for a deepening of the piety; of our people, resulting in the steady and systematic giving of their means to the Treasury of Christ.

We should all pray for grace to answer this call in the name of Christ.

# PART THIRD—CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

## SECTION I

## THE PERSONAL LIFE

YOUR HABITS AND CHARACTER, YOUR CHURCH COVENANT, YOUR CONSECRATION

### NOTE

This Part is composed of two sections, of which the first is a personal, and the second a reference section.

The brief article on "Your Habits and Character" contains something which all of us need to remember. The pages about "Your Church Covenant" are very vital to every one who is about to join the Church. The chapter on "My Consecration" is a pledge which you make to the Lord Jesus. Read it sometimes when you are alone. Henry Drummond says that if we want our lives filled with love, we should read the chapter on love (1 Cor. 13) once a day for three weeks, and after that at least once a week until it becomes a part of us. It would be well to do this with these pages on "Your Consecration" to Jesus Christ.

The second section contains the "Baptismal Covenant," the "Membership Covenant," the "Apostles' Creed," and other things which it is very important to know. They are placed in the Manual for purposes of reference and study. Each is referred to in some one of the lessons of Part First, or Part Second. In fact, the whole Manual aims to make the "Membership Covenant" clear. We should commit to memory the Apostles' Creed and the Ten Commandments, and carefully study the "General Rules" and the "Central Teachings of the Articles of Religion."

## Section I

## THE PERSONAL LIFE

### YOUR HABITS AND CHARACTER

The effects of our deeds do not cease even when the acts have been forgotten, for every act and thought helps to mold our habits and character. Habits are our accustomed, fixed ways of doing and thinking. Our acts, like a wagon, easily follow a track that is already made. Every time we do a thing it becomes a part of us. It is about as easy to start a good habit as a bad one. For example, it is more interesting and pleasant to form the habits of cleanliness, punctuality, and politeness than to drift into habits of slovenliness, tardiness, and impoliteness. Every habit grows with the doing; and some of them, like the liquor, gambling, and tobacco habits, soon become too strong for us to break without a great struggle and divine help.

Think about your habits. Are they the kind that belong to a Christian life and would please your Lord Jesus? Break away from evil or anything that is foolish just as soon as you notice it, before it becomes a habit; **cultivate good habits.** Every good habit adds to the value and the joy of your life.

There are **habits of the mind,** as well as of the body. Pascal once asked, "Which would you rather be, a king who dreams every night that he is a beggar, or a beggar who dreams every night that he is a king?" "As a man thinketh in his heart so is he." Our world is bright or gloomy, good or bad, big or little, according to our thoughts. The most important habits are habits of the mind. Faultfinding, jealousy, sulkiness, cheating, are all bad habits of the mind. Cheerfulness, truthfulness, and gratitude are good habits of the mind. Habits of prayer, of loyalty to duty, unselfishness and sympathy are virtues which make life beautiful and strong. "Have this mind in you which was also in Christ Jesus."

**"As we are we see."** People become blind to their faults because evil does not seem very bad when it has become a fixed habit. To a beautiful soul the world is beautiful; to a sordid soul the world is sordid.

In youth we naturally desire to be good, and seek to

become like those whom we most admire. Such desires are called **ideals.** Our ideals are prompted by the Holy Spirit, and Christian ideals are a part of a Christian character.

Our characters are our natural dispositions developed by our habits and ideals. Character is the real self. It is both what we are and what we are becoming. Character becomes more fixed the older we become.

"Sow a thought, reap an act;
Sow an act, reap a habit;
Sow a habit, reap a character;
Sow a character, reap a destiny."

God has given us a free will. Will is the power to choose, and **youth is the time of choosing.** In youth we chose our habits, our religion, our lifework, and our life companions. **Always choose the best things.** Never allow yourself to dwell on what is bad or impure. Give attention to the good. Paul says, "Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honorable, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure—think on these things" (Phil. 4. 8).

## YOUR CHURCH COVENANT

If you have faithfully studied this manual, you now know the most important things that a Christian ought to learn about Christ and his Church. During all this time it has been taken for granted that you were loving the Lord, and that at the end of your training you would accept the Covenant of our Church. The time has now come for you to **make your final decision.** Think it over quietly and decide for yourself with the help of God once and forever.

Look at the Covenant you are about to make before God and the whole congregation. You are asked:[1]

I. To accept and confirm the baptismal covenant. This solemnly pledges you to reject sin in every form and to live a Christian life. If you have a **fixed purpose** in your heart **to be a Christian,** answer, "I do."

II. You are asked, "Do you receive Jesus Christ as your Saviour, and do you confess him as your Lord and Master?" The first question made clear your willingness to be a Christian; in this one you affirm that you are a Christian.

[1] The exact questions are on page 98.

There was a lad whose mother died when he was very young, but his few memories of her were very beautiful and precious to him. As he grew older the image of his mother was constantly in his mind. It kept him from many temptations and turned his mind to noble things. In time he learned to love Jesus also and the thought of Jesus acted just like that of his mother and gradually eclipsed the image of his mother. Does Christ help you in some such way? When you pray earnestly, is there a sense of joy and peace in your heart? Have you asked the Saviour to forgive your sins and have you believed and felt that you were forgiven? Do you love Jesus Christ as you love your parents and your best friends? Then you may answer this question by saying, "I trust I have," or even, "I know I have."

III. Do you accept and profess the Christian Faith, as it is contained in the New Testament of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. The answer, "I do," indicates that you are a Christian.

IV. Will you be loyal to our Church and uphold it by your prayers, your presence, your gifts and your service? This question is to be answered in the light of all you have learned about our Church. If you mean to be **a true Methodist,** answer, "I will."

V. Will you do your part according to your ability to support the Church and its great benevolent enterprises? If you expect to be **one of our liberal, loyal members,** answer, "I will."

The rich young ruler came to Jesus and asked, "What must I do to inherit eternal life?" and he urged Jesus to tell him what he lacked. Jesus loved him and gave him the opportunity to become one of his followers, on condition that he would sell what he had and give it to the poor. When he heard that, he went away sorrowing and never, as far as we know, returned to Jesus. You could also go away, if you were unwilling to make this covenant, but it would be a great sorrow, and no one knows when you would ever come back.

Make your Covenant **now.** God will help you. Your Christian life will not be a burden but a great joy. It will become easier and better day by day. Come in a prayerful, trusting spirit, and Christ and his Church **will welcome you, love you, bless you.**

## YOUR CONSECRATION

You have now reached the place where you should carefully and prayerfully examine your own heart and consecrate yourself to God in some such way as the following:

"I am about to take one of the most important steps of my life—to make a public confession of Christ, and to be received into the Church.

"From a child I have heard of Jesus Christ and enjoyed singing and thinking about him. Often when I prayed to him I felt as good and satisfied as when mother kissed me good-night. As I grew older, I became more changeable. Sometimes I hardly listened to what was being said in Sunday school or church, and I said my prayers without much thought. My mind was full of other things. Then again I turned to the Saviour. He seemed like a Friend whom I had neglected. The Holy Spirit has sometimes impressed my heart although I said nothing about it, and I have had experiences which I could not express.

"During my preparatory training I have thought much more than usual about being a Christian. It may be that I am not as good as my parents and friends think I am, and there are sins in my life which I deeply regret. I am far from being what I ought to be and want to be. I do not know as much as I would like to know about the Christian life, but I am sure that Jesus Christ will help me.

"I Want to Be a True Christian, and Therefore I Promise That:

"I will **pray daily** in secret.

"I will always **be reverent,** and never make light of anything sacred.

"I will seek to **think kindly** of everybody, especially those who try to be Christians.

"I will try to **be unselfish.**

"I will aim to **let my companions know** that I am a Christian, and to take some part in the devotional services of the Church.

"I will **attend public worship** faithfully.

"I will diligently **read my Bible.**

"I will **listen to the Spirit** of God at all times.

"I will try to **do something** every day for Jesus' sake, and seek to be honest, kind, and true.

"I will **give liberally** toward the work of the Church and other noble causes.

"I will **obey** my parents and teachers.

"I will **not do doubtful things**; but I will wait until I am sure that they are right.

"I will seek to **help my fellow men** at all times and live according to the 'Golden Rule.'"

"When soldiers enlist, they take an oath of allegiance: **I now solemnly pledge my life to the service of Jesus Christ, my Lord and my King.**

"I am but one, but I am one.
I cannot do much, but I can do something.
What I can do, I ought to do,
And what I ought to do, I will do."

### My Consecration Prayer

**Lord Jesus, I love thee as my best Friend, and will trust thee like my mother. I now consecrate myself to thee. Take me just as I am. Forgive all my sins and the failures of the past. Help me to love the things that thou dost love; to do the things that thou wouldst have me do; and to be that which thou wouldst have me be. Teach me, keep me, use me, Saviour, day by day, now and forever. Amen.**

## SECTION II

## COVENANTS, CONFESSIONS, RULES, AND FORMS FOR THE RECEPTION OF MEMBERS

Church Membership Covenant, The Baptismal Covenant, The Apostles' Creed, The Ten Commandments, The General Confession, The General Rules, The Special Advice on Amusements, The Central Teachings of the Articles of Religion, The Ten Doctrines of Grace, Forms.

## Section II

# COVENANTS, CONFESSIONS, RULES, AND PRAYERS

### THE CHURCH MEMBERSHIP COVENANT

The minister addresses the applicants for admission into full membership as follows:

Dearly Beloved, you are come hither seeking the great privilege of union with the Church our Saviour has purchased with his own blood. We rejoice in the grace of God vouchsafed unto you in that he has called you to be his *followers,* and that thus far you have run well. You have heard how solemn are the duties of membership in Christ's Church; and before you are fully admitted thereto, it is proper that you do here publicly renew your vows, confess your faith, and declare your purpose, by answering the following questions:

Do you here, in the presence of God and of this Congregation, renew the solemn promises contained in the Baptismal Covenant, ratifying and confirming the same, and acknowledging *yourselves* bound faithfully to observe and keep that Covenant?

*Answer.* I do. (See pages 41-45, also page 84, and the baptismal covenant, page 90.)

Do you receive Jesus Christ as your Saviour, and do you confess him as your Lord and Master?

*Answer.* I do.

Do you receive and profess the Christian faith as contained in the New Testament of our Lord Jesus Christ?

*Answer.* I do. (See Part First: Lessons I–XI.)

Will you be loyal to the Methodist Episcopal Church, and uphold it by your prayer, your presence, your gifts and your service?

*Answer.* I will. (See Part Second: Lessons IX–XVI.)

If no objections are alleged, the minister extends to each person the right hand of fellowship, and concludes the service with prayer.

## THE CONVERT'S COVENANT*

I, here and now, reject the sinful and worldly life and solemnly promise by the help of God to resist sin in every form.

I believe in God our Father, who is in heaven, "who loves us and gives us all good things."

I believe in our Lord Jesus Christ, "who gave his life for us, forgives us our sins, and teaches us" to love God with all our heart and our neighbor as ourselves.

"I believe in the Holy Spirit, who helps us in our trials, delivers us from evil, leads us into all truth and works in us to do the will of God."

I believe in the Church, in the life after death, and in the kingdom of God on earth and in heaven.

I accept baptism as a sacred pledge, that I will obediently keep God's holy will and commandments and walk in them all the days of my life. Amen.

## THE APOSTLES' CREED

I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth: and in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; the third day he rose from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Ghost; the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. Amen.

## THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

I. Thou shalt have no other gods before me.

II. Thou shalt not make unto thee a graven image, nor any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: thou shalt not bow down thyself unto them, nor serve them; for I Jehovah thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, upon the third and upon the fourth generation of them that hate me, and showing lovingkindness unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.

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*This contains the substance of the pledge made by the young Christian at the time of baptism and reception into full membership. See Discipline, ¶¶ 524-528.

III. Thou shalt not take the name of Jehovah thy God in vain; for Jehovah will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.

IV. Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work; but the seventh day is a Sabbath unto Jehovah thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates; for in six days Jehovah made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore Jehovah blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it.

V. Honor thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long in the land which Jehovah thy God giveth thee.

VI. Thou shalt not kill.

VII. Thou shalt not commit adultery.

VIII. Thou shalt not steal.

IX. Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.

X. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house, thou shall not covet thy neighbor's wife, nor his man-servant, nor his maid-servant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor anything that is thy neighbor's.

## THE GENERAL CONFESSION

Almighty God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Maker of all things, Judge of all men, we acknowledge and bewail our manifold sins and wickedness, which we from time to time most grievously have committed, by thought, word, and deed, against thy Divine Majesty, provoking most justly thy wrath and indignation against us. We do earnestly repent, and are heartily sorry for these our misdoings; the remembrance of them is grievous unto us. Have mercy upon us, have mercy upon us, most merciful Father; for thy Son, our Lord Jesus Christ's sake, forgive us all that is past; and grant that we may ever hereafter serve and please thee in newness of life, to the honor and glory of thy name, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

## THE GENERAL RULES OF OUR CHURCH

(Abbreviated. Printed in full in the Discipline, ¶ ¶ 26-33.)

THE GENERAL RULES

**Forbid:** (*a*) **Doing harm or evil of any kind**—Profanity (swearing); unnecessary work and buying or selling on Sunday; using, buying, or selling intoxicating liquors as a beverage; fighting, quarreling, brawling, brother going to law with brother; returning evil for evil; smuggling; taking usury or unlawful interest; uncharitable or unprofitable conversation, particularly speaking evil of magistrates or of ministers; doing to others as we would not they should do unto us.

(*b*) **Doing what we know is not for the glory of God,** as: Extravagance in dress; the taking such diversions as cannot be used in the name of the Lord Jesus; singing smutty songs and reading questionable and harmful books; needless self-indulgence; laying up treasure upon the earth; contracting debts without a probability of being able to pay them.

THE GENERAL RULES

**Require us to be merciful and to do good** of every possible sort, and as far as possible to all men;

To their bodies, by giving food to the hungry, by clothing the naked, by visiting or helping them that are sick or in prison.

To their souls, by instructing, reproving, or encouraging all with whom we come in contact.

By doing good, especially to Christians, employing them preferably to others; buying one of another; helping each other in business.

By being diligent and frugal.

By running with patience the race which is set before us, denying ourselves and taking up our cross daily.

THE GENERAL RULES

**Enjoin attendance upon all the ordinances of God.** Such are:

The Public Worship of God.

The Lord's Supper.

Family and private prayer.

Bible study.

## SPECIAL ADVICE REGARDING AMUSEMENTS

(Discipline 1924, ¶ 69)

Improper amusements and excessive indulgence in innocent amusements are serious barriers to the beginning of the religious life and fruitful causes of spiritual decline. Some amusements in common use are positively demoralizing and furnish the first easy steps to the total loss of character. We therefore look with deep concern on the great increase of amusements and on the general prevalence of harmful amusements, and lift up a solemn note of warning and entreaty particularly against attendance upon immoral, questionable, and misleading theatrical or motion picture performances; against dancing; and against such games of chance as are frequently associated with gambling; all of which have been found to be antagonistic to vital piety, promotive of worldliness, and especially pernicious to youth. We affectionately admonish all our people to make their amusements the subject of careful thought and frequent prayer, to study the subject of amusements in the light of their tendencies, and to be scrupulously careful in this matter to set no injurious example. . . . We deem it our bounden duty to summon the whole Church to apply a thoughtful and instructed conscience to the choice of amusements, and not to leave them to accident, or taste, or passion; and we affectionately advise and beseech every member of the Church absolutely to avoid "the taking of such diversions as cannot be used in the name of the Lord Jesus."

## THE CENTRAL TEACHINGS OF THE ARTICLES OF RELIGION

The Articles are printed in full in the Discipline (¶¶ 1–25.)

1. There is but one God, but he has revealed himself as a Trinity—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

2. Jesus is the God-man. He was truly man and also truly God.

3. Jesus arose with his body from the grave and lives forever.

4. The Holy Spirit is a divine Person.

5. The Bible contains all we need to know to be saved and is our only sacred rule of faith and life.*

6. The Old Testament is sacred as well as the New Testament. The Old Testament ceremonies and customs were for the Jewish people, but its general precepts are for all.

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*A star (*) indicates that the article is not accepted by the Roman Catholic Church.

7. All men inherit from their ancestors evil as well as good traits and desires. These inherited evil impulses incline us to do wrong, and are therefore called "birth sins," or "original sin."

8. Each of us has a free will and can choose right or wrong, but we are unable without the help of God to live a good and holy life.

9. We are saved by faith and faith alone. No one can be saved by his good works.*

10. Good works that are done in the right spirit are pleasing to God. They are the necessary fruits of a Christian life.

11. No one can do more good than he ought to do, so there can be no works of "supererogation" to be credited to other people.*

12. A Christian who falls into sin can receive God's forgiveness if he truly repents.

13. The visible Church of Christ is comprised of believing people banded together to provide for the preaching of the gospel and the administration of the sacraments.*

14. The Roman Catholic view of purgatory, the pardon of sins, and the worship of images, relics, and saints is contrary to the Word of God.*

15. In the public worship and the sacraments only a language the people can understand should be used.*

16. There are only two sacraments, Baptism and the Lord's Supper.*

17. Baptism is a symbol of the new birth, or the beginning of the Christian life.

18. The Lord's Supper is a symbol of Christ's suffering and death for us. The bread and wine are not changed into Christ's body.*

19. The people have a right to both the bread and the wine in the Lord's Supper.*

20. The "mass" is unscriptural and utterly wrong.*

21. Ministers have a right to get married.*

22. Every Church, or denomination, has the right to adopt and use a ritual of its own.*

23. The government of the United States is and ought to be free and independent.

24. Christians have a right to own private property, if they use it in a Christian way.

25. It is right for the sake of justice and truth to take an oath before a proper official.

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*A star (*) indicates that the article is not accepted by the Roman Catholic Church.

## TEN DOCTRINES OF GRACE WHICH METHODISTS BELIEVE AND TEACH

By Bishop Vincent

I. I believe that all men are sinners.

II. I believe that God the Father loves all men and hates sin.

III. I believe that Jesus Christ died for all men to make possible their salvation from sin, and to make sure the salvation of all who believe in him.

IV. I believe that the Holy Spirit is given to all men to enlighten and to incline them to repent of their sins and to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ.

V. I believe that all who repent of their sins and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ receive the forgiveness of sin. (This is justification.)

VI. I believe that all who receive the forgiveness of sin are at the same time made new creatures in Christ Jesus. (This is regeneration.)

VII. I believe that all who are made new creatures in Christ Jesus are accepted as the children of God. (This is adoption.)

VIII. I believe that all who are accepted as the children of God may receive the inward assurance of the Holy Spirit to that fact. (This is the witness of the Spirit.)

IX. I believe that all who truly desire and seek it may love God with all their heart and soul, mind and strength, and their neighbors as themselves. (This is entire sanctification.)

X. I believe that all who persevere to the end, and only those, shall be saved in heaven forever. (This is the true final perseverance.)

## RECEPTION OF MEMBERS

### Form for Receiving Persons into the Church as Preparatory Members

[The use of this form is discretionary with the minister.]

*Those who are to be received into the Church as Preparatory Members may be called forward by name, and the Minister, addressing the Congregation, shall say:*

DEARLY BELOVED BRETHREN, that none may be admitted hastily into the Church, we receive persons who seek fellowship with us on profession of faith into a preparatory membership; in which proof may be made, both to themselves and to the Church, of the sincerity and depth of their convictions and of the strength of their purpose to lead a new life.

The persons here present desire to be so admitted. You will hear their answers to the questions put to them, and if you make no objection they will be received.

It is needful, however, that you be reminded of your own responsibility, as having previously entered this holy fellowship and now representing the Church into which they seek admission. Inasmuch as they should find in you holy examples of life and loving help in the true serving of their Lord and ours, I beseech you so to order your own lives that these new disciples may take no detriment from you, but that it may ever be to them a cause for thanksgiving to God that they were led into this fellowship.

*Then, addressing the Persons seeking Admission as Preparatory Members, the Minister shall say:*

Dearly Beloved, you have, by the grace of God, made your decision to follow Christ and to serve him. Your confidence in so doing is not to be based on any notion of fitness or worthiness in yourselves, but on the gracious promise of God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, who loved us and gave himself for us.

That the Church may know your purpose, you will answer the following questions:

Have you an earnest desire to be saved from your sins?

*Answer.* **I have.**

Will you guard against all things contrary to the teaching of God's Word, and endeavor to lead a holy life, following the commandments of God?

*Answer.* **I will endeavor so to do.**

Will you give reverent attendance upon the appointed means of grace in the ministry of the Word, and in the private and public worship of God?

*Answer.* **With the help of God, I will.**

*The Minister shall then welcome the Candidates as Preparatory Members, and may assign them to classes. Then may the Minister offer extemporary Prayer.*

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### Form for Receiving Persons into the Church from Preparatory Membership After Required Instruction Has Been Given

*On the day appointed, all that are to be received into the Church shall be called forward, and the Minister, addressing the Congregation, shall say:*

Dearly Beloved, the Scriptures teach us that the Church is the household of God, the body of which Christ is the head; and that it is the design of the gospel to bring together in one all who are in Christ. The end of this fellowship is the salvation of men and the establishment of the kingdom of God upon earth. As helps thereto the Church is charged with the maintenance of sound doctrine and of the ordinances of Christian worship, and with the exercise of that power of godly admonition and discipline which Christ has committed to her for the promotion of holiness. The duties of those united in this fellowship are to continue steadfast in the faith and practice of the gospel; to promote the peace and unity of the Church; to labor for the spread of love and righteousness; and by word and deed to bring others into the fold of Jesus Christ.

Into this holy fellowship the *persons* before you, who have already received the sacrament of Baptism and have been under instruction in the doctrines of Holy Scripture as taught by the Methodist Episcopal Church, *come* seeking admission. We now propose, in the fear of God, to question *them* as to *their* faith and purposes, that you may know that *they are* proper *persons* to be admitted into the Church.

*The Minister addresses the Applicants for Admission into Full Membership as follows:*

Dearly Beloved, you are come hither seeking the great privilege of union with the Church our Saviour has purchased with his own blood. We rejoice in the grace of God vouchsafed unto you in that he has called you to be his *followers*, and that thus far you have run

well. You have heard how solemn are the duties of membership in Christ's Church; and before you are fully admitted thereto, it is proper that you do here publicly renew your vows, confess your faith, and declare your purpose, by answering the following questions:

Do you here, in the presence of God and of this Congregation, renew the solemn promises contained in the Baptismal Covenant, ratifying and confirming the same, and acknowledging *yourselves* bound faithfully to observe and keep that Covenant?

*Answer.* **I do.**

Do you receive Jesus Christ as your Saviour, and do you confess him as your Lord and Master?

*Answer.* **I do.**

Do you receive and profess the Christian faith as contained in the New Testament of our Lord Jesus Christ?

*Answer.* **I do.**

Will you be loyal to the Methodist Episcopal Church, and uphold it by your prayer, your presence, your gifts, and your service?

*Answer.* **I will.**

*Then, the Candidates kneeling, the Minister shall say:*

Defend, O Lord, *these* thy *servants* with thy heavenly grace; that *they* may continue thine forever; and daily increase in thy Holy Spirit, more and more, until *they* come unto thy everlasting kingdom. *Amen.*

*Then the Minister, extending the right hand of fellowship, shall say to the Candidates:*

We welcome you to the communion of the Church of God; and, in testimony of our Christian affection and the cordiality with which we receive you, I hereby extend to you the right hand of fellowship: and may God grant that you may be a faithful and useful Member of the Church militant till you are called to the fellowship of the Church triumphant, which is "without fault before the throne of God."

## Form for Receiving Children as Members of the Church After Required Instruction Has Been Given

We regard all children who have been baptized as standing in covenant relation to God, and as preparatory members under the special care and supervision of the Church. Whenever baptized children shall understand the obligation of religion, and shall give evidence of piety, they may be admitted into full membership in the Church. See Discipline, paragraphs 49 to 54.

*At the appointed time, the Minister shall read the names of the children to be received; and, after they have come forward, he shall say to the Congregation*

DEARLY BELOVED, these persons here present before you are baptized children of the Church, who, having arrived at the years of discretion, desire now to confirm the vows of their baptism and to enter upon the active duties and the full privileges of membership in the Church of Christ. They have been duly instructed as to the truths of the Christian faith, and have been examined as to their fitness for such membership. Before they assume the required vows, let us invoke on their behalf the gracious blessing of God our Father, and the continued presence of the Holy Spirit who hath inclined their hearts to this end.

*Then shall the Minister say:*

Let us pray.

Almighty and everlasting God, who has appointed unto children a place in thy kingdom, and through thy well beloved Son didst give unto them thy blessing, we beseech thee that thou wilt visit with thy favor the homes of this congregation, and fill the hearts of all parents with the fear of God and the spirit of wisdom and love. We pray that thy church may be faithful in the nurture of those committed to her care. Let thy blessing rest upon these, thy children, whom thou hast graciously inclined to thy service and to the fellowship of thy people. We beseech thee, that thou wilt so further them by thy grace and direct them by thy Spirit, that they may be faithful servants in thy kingdom on earth, and finally reign with thee in thy kingdom above, through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

*Then shall the Minister say:*

Hear the words of the Gospel as written by St. Luke (Chap. 2. 40-52).

And the child grew, and waxed strong, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon him. And his parents went every year to Jerusalem at the feast

of the passover. And when he was twelve years old, they went up after the custom of the feast; and when they had fulfilled the days, as they were returning, the boy Jesus tarried behind in Jerusalem; and his parents knew it not; but supposing him to be in the company, they went a day's journey; and they sought for him among their kinsfolk and acquaintance: and when they found him not, they returned to Jerusalem, seeking for him. And it came to pass, after three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers, both hearing them, and asking them questions: and all that heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers. And when they saw him, they were astonished; and his mother said unto him, Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? behold, thy father and I sought thee sorrowing. And he said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? know ye not that I must be in my Father's house? And they understood not the saying which he spake unto them. And he went down with them, and came to Nazareth; and he was subject unto them: and his mother kept all *these* sayings in her heart.

*Then shall the Minister address the Persons seeking Admission as follows:*

Dearly Beloved, we rejoice in the grace of God in that he has brought you to this place, and by his Spirit has confirmed you in your purpose to serve him and to live in the fellowship of the Church of Christ. It is needful now that you should declare your faith and purpose in the presence of this congregation by answering the following questions:

Do you here, in the presence of God and of this congregation, renew the solemn promises contained in the Baptismal Covenant, ratifying and confirming the same, and acknowledging *yourselves* bound faithfully to observe and keep that Covenant?

*Answer.* I do.

Do you receive Jesus Christ as your Saviour, and do you confess him as your Lord and Master?

*Answer.* I do.

Do you receive and profess the Christian Faith as contained in the New Testament of our Lord Jesus Christ?

*Answer.* I do.

Will you be loyal to the Methodist Episcopal Church, and uphold it by your prayer, your presence, your gifts, and your service?

*Answer.* **I will.**

*Then, the Candidates kneeling, the Minister shall say:*

Defend, O Lord, *these* thy *Children* with thy heavenly grace, that *they* may continue thine forever, and daily increase in thy Holy Spirit more and more, until *they* come unto thy everlasting kingdom. *Amen.*

*Then the Minister, extending the right hand of fellowship, shall say to the Candidates:*

We welcome you to the communion of the Church of God; and, in testimony of our Christian affection and the cordiality with which we receive you, I hereby extend to you the right hand of fellowship: and may God grant that you may be a faithful and useful Member of the Church militant till you are called to the fellowship of the Church triumphant, which is "without fault before the throne of God."

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